

HARROW

— OMNIBUS ONE —

COUNTY™

"A rare thing—both
wonderfully charming and
genuinely disturbing."

—Mike Mignola (*Hellboy*)



CULLEN BUNN • TYLER CROOK

CARLA SPEED McNEIL • HANNAH LAVENDER • JENN MANLEY LEE

HARROW

OMNIBUS ONE

COUNTY™



HARROW — OMNIBUS ONE — COUNTY

COUNTLESS HAINTS, TWICE TOLD,
SNAKE DOCTOR, and FAMILY TREE



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HARROW COUNTY™

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ONE





THE FOLK OF HARROW COUNTY
PUT THE WITCH TO DEATH...

...BUT THE WITCH
DID NOT DIE EASILY.



HESTER BECK HAD BEEN
SHOT, STABBED, BEATEN...

...AND FINALLY
HANGED BY
THE NECK.



SHE HAD BEEN ONE OF THEM,
THOUGH--A NEIGHBOR AND...
AT TIMES... A FRIEND...

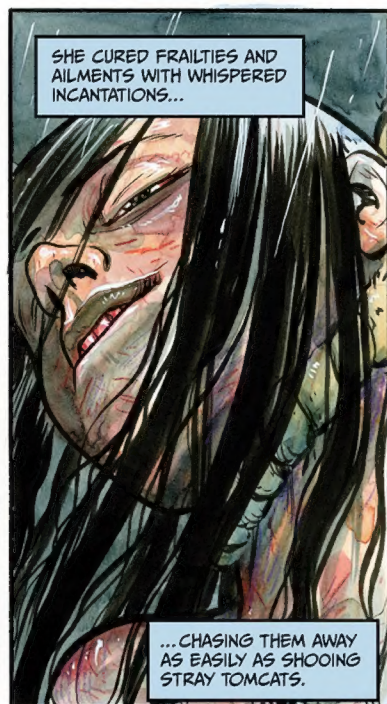
...AND THEM THAT KILLED HER
WOULD'VE GIVEN HER A PROPER
BURIAL AND LAST RITES...



...BUT THE RAIN WASHED THE
PAGES OF THE BIBLE CLEAN.



IN LIFE, HESTER HAD
BEEN A HEALING WOMAN.



SHE CURED FRAILTIES AND
AILMENTS WITH WHISPERED
INCANTATIONS...

...CHASING THEM AWAY
AS EASILY AS SHOOING
STRAY TOMCATS.



FOR A TIME, FOLK TURNED A BLIND EYE WHEN LIVESTOCK STARTED DYING IN HESTER'S PRESENCE.

"THERE MUST BE A TRADE," THEY MIGHT SAY. "WHAT IS TAKEN MUST BE GIVEN."



BUT THEY COULD SCARCELY ABIDE THE LOCAL CHILDREN FOLLOWING HER OUT TO SULFUR CREEK...

...AND PARTICIPATING IN STRANGE SERMONS AND BAPTISMS.



NOR COULD THEY STOMACH RUMORS OF BLASPHEMOUS CONGRESS WITH HEINOUS THINGS OUT IN THE WOODS.

THEY NO LONGER SAT IDLY BY...



...WHEN THEY DISCOVERED HOW SHE FED HER VILE COMPANIONS...

...AND HOW SHE STRENGTHENED HER OWN SUPERNATURAL GIFTS.



THESE MURDEROUS FRIENDS
AND NEIGHBORS KNEW...

...JUST AS HESTER
COULD CURE OTHERS...

...SHE MIGHT
HEAL HERSELF.



AND SO THEY PUT
HER TO BULLET AND
BLADE AND NOOSE...



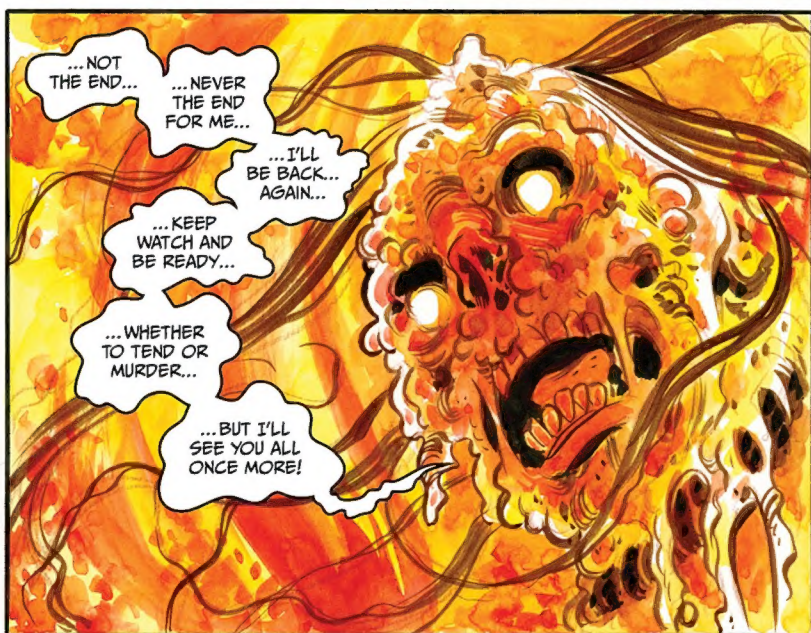
...AND FINALLY FIRE.

GOD
HELP ME.



BUT EVEN AS HER
FLESH BURNED AWAY
FROM THE BONE...

...HESTER BECK
TREMBLED AND
HISSED.



...NOT
THE END...

...NEVER
THE END
FOR ME...

...I'LL
BE BACK...
AGAIN...

...KEEP
WATCH AND
BE READY...

...WHETHER
TO TEND OR
MURDER...

...BUT I'LL
SEE YOU ALL
ONCE MORE!



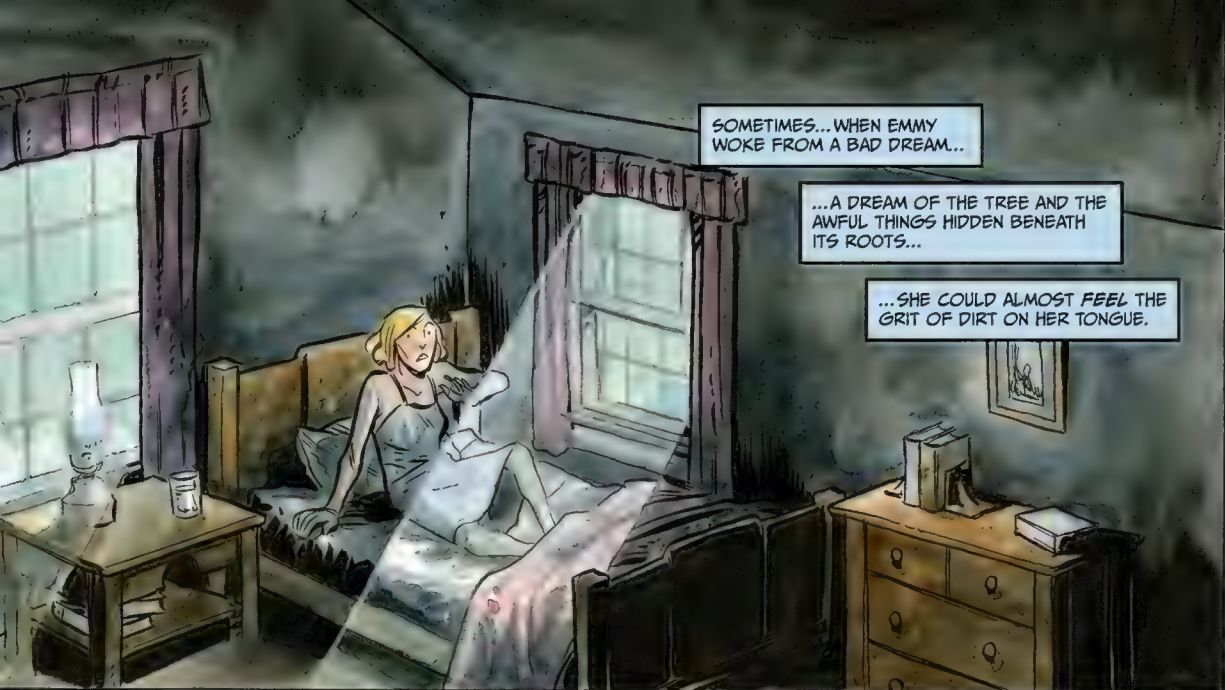
THERE WAS TRUTH IN THE
DEAD WOMAN'S WORDS...

...A PROMISE TO REVISIT
THE SINS OF THE DAY...

...TO JUDGE AND PUNISH THOSE
INQUIETIES THAT NOT EVEN THE
RAIN COULD WASH AWAY.



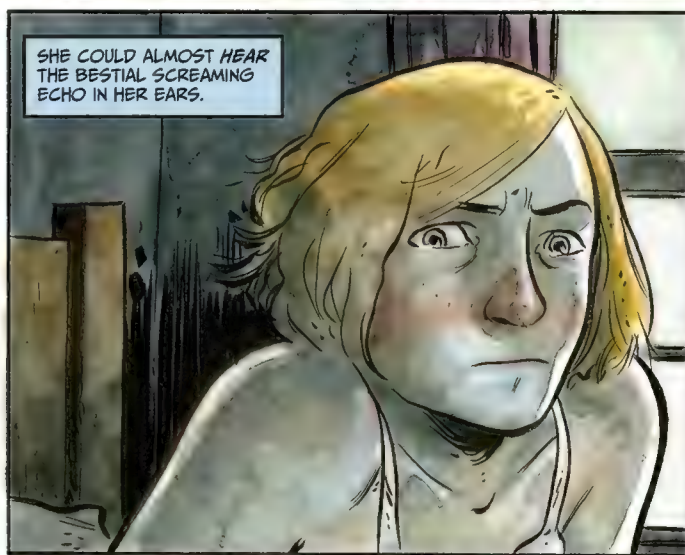
HER EARLIEST MEMORIES WERE OF
THE TASTE OF FRESHLY TURNED EARTH
AND THE BLEATING OF GOATS.



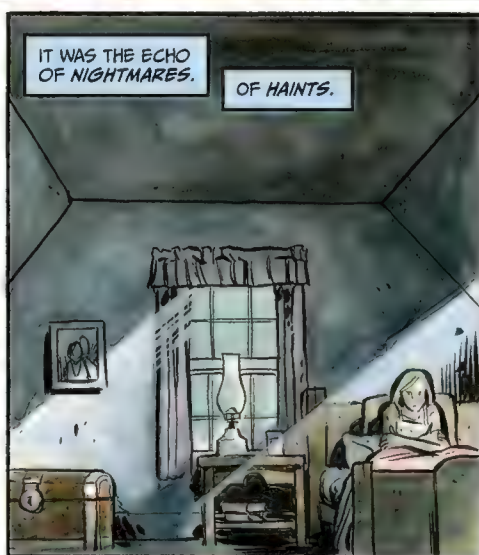
SOMETIMES...WHEN EMMY
WOKE FROM A BAD DREAM...

...A DREAM OF THE TREE AND THE
AWFUL THINGS HIDDEN BENEATH
ITS ROOTS...

...SHE COULD ALMOST FEEL THE
GRIT OF DIRT ON HER TONGUE.



SHE COULD ALMOST HEAR
THE BESTIAL SCREAMING
ECHO IN HER EARS.



IT WAS THE ECHO
OF NIGHTMARES.

OF HAINTS.



SHE COULD NOT SEE
THEM, BUT SHE KNEW
THEY WERE THERE.

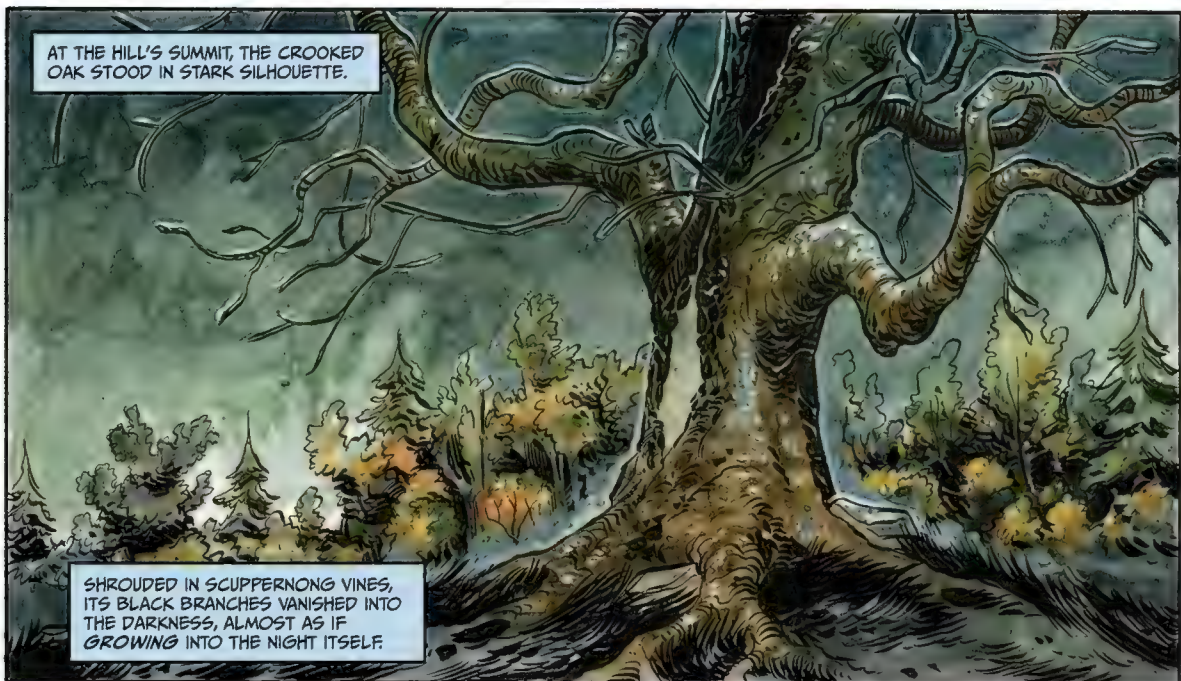
WRAPPED IN SHADOW, THEY
CROWDED CLOSE TO THE
BED, WATCHING HER.



COUNTLESS HAINTS.



AND THE TREE WATCHED
OVER THEM ALL.



AT THE HILL'S SUMMIT, THE CROOKED
OAK STOOD IN STARK SILHOUETTE.

SHROUDED IN SCUPPERNONG VINES,
ITS BLACK BRANCHES VANISHED INTO
THE DARKNESS, ALMOST AS IF
GROWING INTO THE NIGHT ITSELF.



YEARS AGO, OR SO EMMY HAD
BEEN TOLD, THE OAK HAD BEEN
STRUCK BY LIGHTNING.

THE TREE HAD NOT
GROWN SINCE, AND A ROTTING HOLLOW
NOW YAWNED IN
THE TRUNK.



THE CAVITY HAD BEEN
FILLED TO KEEP THE
WOUND FROM SPREADING.

BUT THE DECAYING WOOD
PULLED AWAY FROM THE
CONCRETE LIKE GUMS
RECEDING FROM OLD,
BLUNTED TEETH.



EMMY HATED THAT TREE,
AND SHE FEARED IT, TOO.

FEARED ITS SECRETS.



IN EMMY'S DREAMS, THE TREE
BUCKED AND SHUDDERED.

IT SQUIRMED IN THE EARTH
AS IF TRYING TO FREE ITSELF.



THE DRAPING GRAPEVINES
RUSTLED WITH A SOUND LIKE
HISSING WHISPERS.



AND THE GRIT-ENCRUSTED LIPS
OF THE HOLLOW TWITCHED
OPEN AND CLOSED LIKE A
HUNGRY MOUTH.



LIES!

LIES!



WHAT DO
YOU KNOW, YOU
OLD MONSTER?

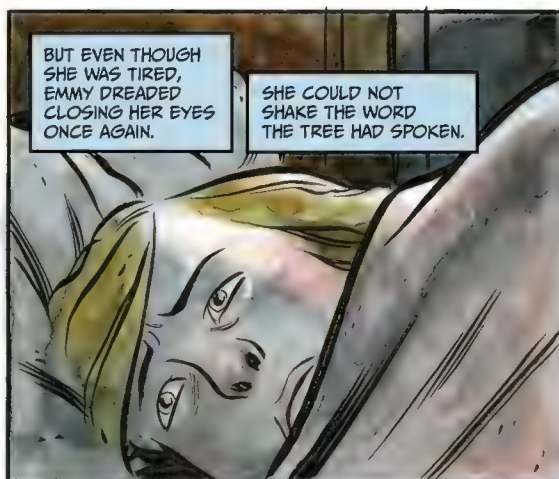


WHAT DO
YOU KNOW?



JUST
A TREE.

NOTHING
MORE.

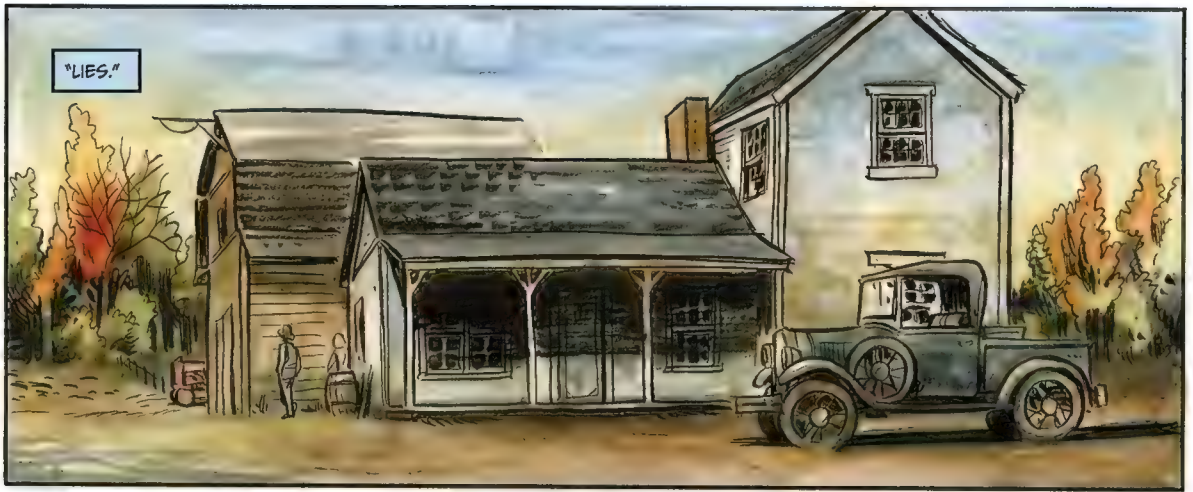


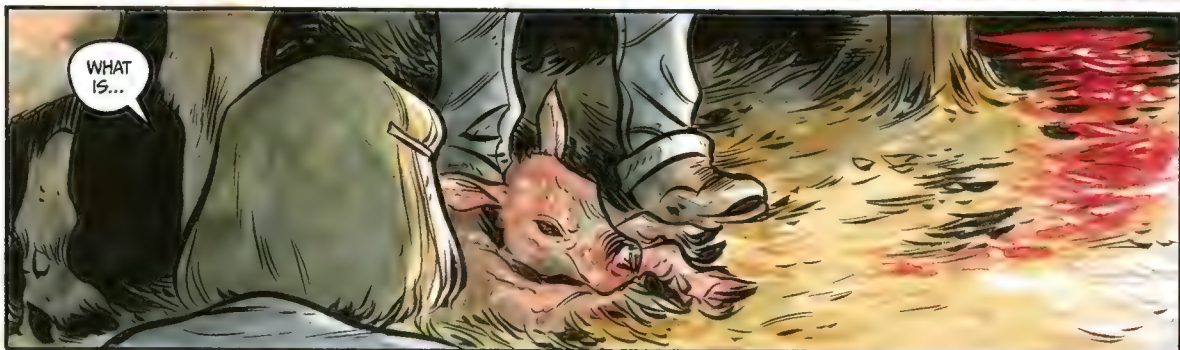
BUT EVEN THOUGH
SHE WAS TIRED,
EMMY DREADED
CLOSING HER EYES
ONCE AGAIN.

SHE COULD NOT
SHAKE THE WORD
THE TREE HAD SPOKEN.



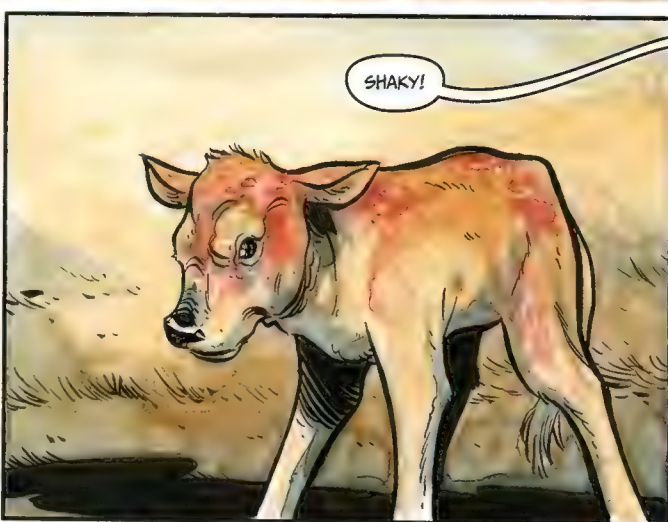
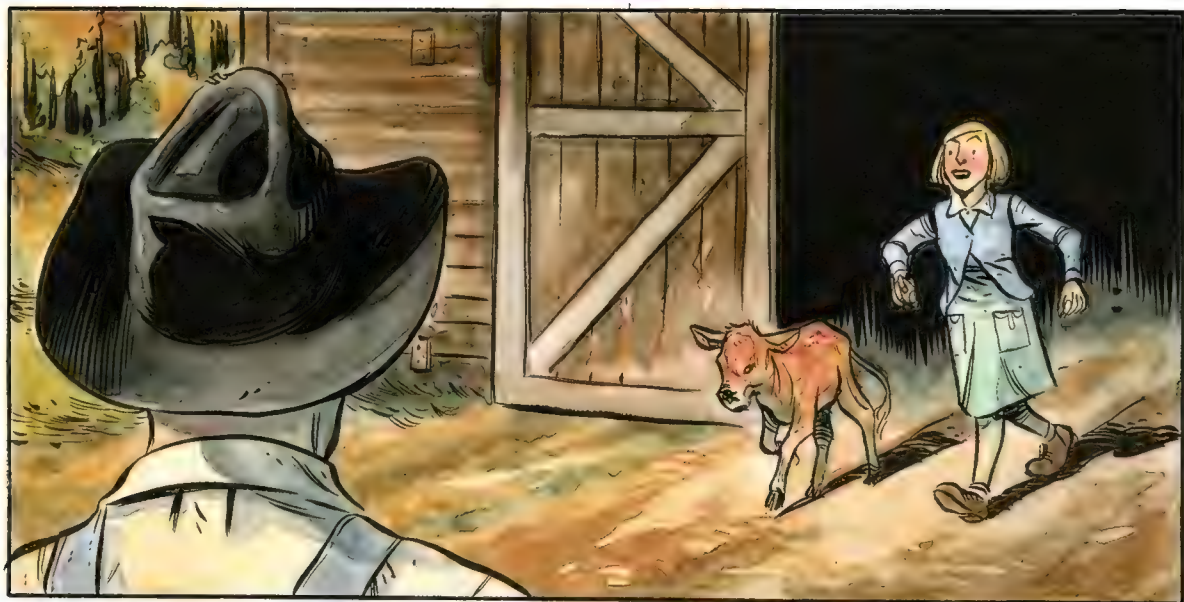
"LIES," THE TREE HAD SAID.

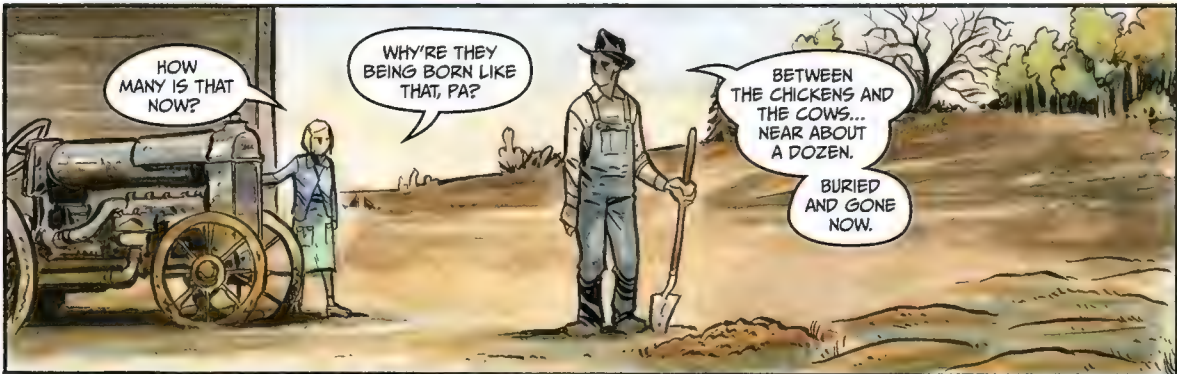
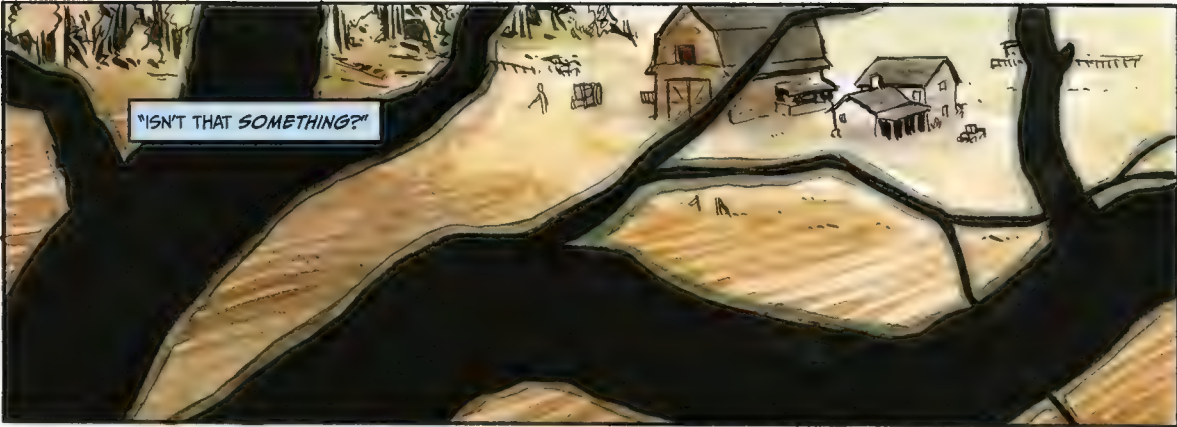


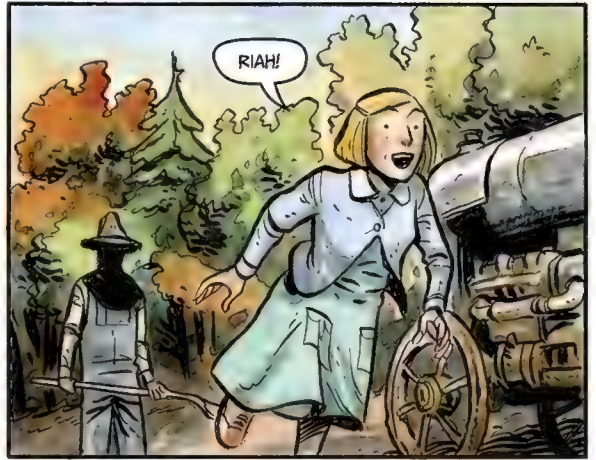










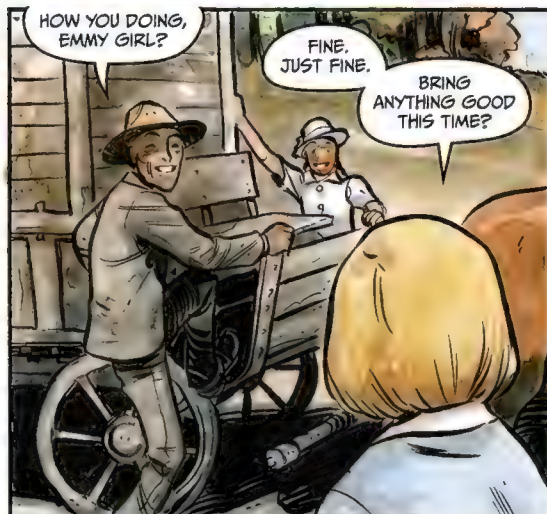




HIS WAGON WAS ALWAYS
LOADED WITH CANNED
FOOD AND DRY GOODS.

PA DIDN'T LIKE THE
MAN FOR ONE REASON
OR ANOTHER.

BUT EMMY ALWAYS
WELCOMED THE COMPANY.



HOW YOU DOING,
EMMY GIRL?

FINE,
JUST FINE.

BRING
ANYTHING GOOD
THIS TIME?



SEE FOR
YOURSELF.

GOT SOME
MORE BOOKS
YOU MIGHT LIKE
TO READ.

GO ON
OVER AND
BERNICE'LL
SHOW YOU.





LOOK
AT ALL THEM
FRESH GRAVES!

YOU HAD
A SPOT OF
MISFORTUNE,
ISAAC?

NOTHING
I CAN'T HANDLE.

JUST A FEVER
RUNNING THROUGH
THE LIVESTOCK.

AND NOTHING
YOU NEED TO WORRY
YOURSELF WITH.



YOU
SURE ABOUT
THAT?

EMMY'S
ALMOST OF
AGE.



IF THERE
WERE SIGNS,
I'D SEE THEM.

NO
CURDLED MILK...
NO STRAY DOGS
SNIFFING ABOUT...
NO BRIMSTONE
STINK.

AIN'T HEARD
HER COMPLAIN
ABOUT DREAMS OR
THE LIKE.



YOU
DON'T NEED TO
CONVINCE ME.

YOU KNOW
THE GIRL BETTER
THAN ANYONE
ELSE.

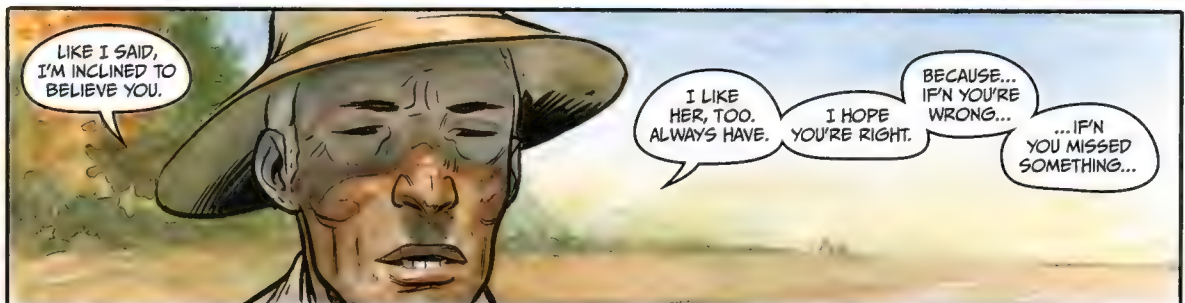
AND SHE
SEEMS NORMAL
ENOUGH, DOESN'T
SHE?



WEREN'T YOU
LISTENING?
SHE IS
NORMAL.

AFTER
WHAT WE DONE
ALL THEM YEARS
AGO...

...SHE AIN'T
COMING
BACK.



LIKE I SAID,
I'M INCLINED TO
BELIEVE YOU.

I LIKE
HER, TOO.
ALWAYS HAVE.

I HOPE
YOU'RE RIGHT.

BECAUSE...
IF N' YOU'RE
WRONG...

...IF N'
YOU MISSED
SOMETHING...



"...THAT GIRL WILL HAVE
HER VENGEANCE...
AGAINST EACH AND
EVERY ONE OF US."



PA?

YOU KNOW
I'VE GOT A BIRTHDAY
IN A FEW DAYS,
DON'T YOU?

CAN'T
SAY AS I'D
FORGET.



BERNICE SAYS HOW
I OUGHT TO GET OUT
AND SEE THE WORLD.

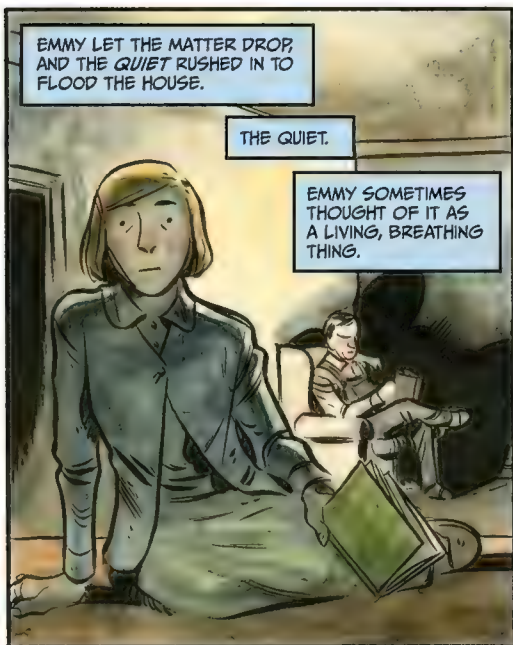
SAID I OUGHT
TO TRY TO MEET
A BOY.

DON'T MUCH
LIKE THE THOUGHT
OF YOU RUNNING OFF
WITH SOME NO-COUNT
FARMER FROM TOWN.



ESPECIALLY CONSIDERING
YOU GOT A NO-COUNT FARMER
DADDY WHO NEEDS YOU
RIGHT HERE.

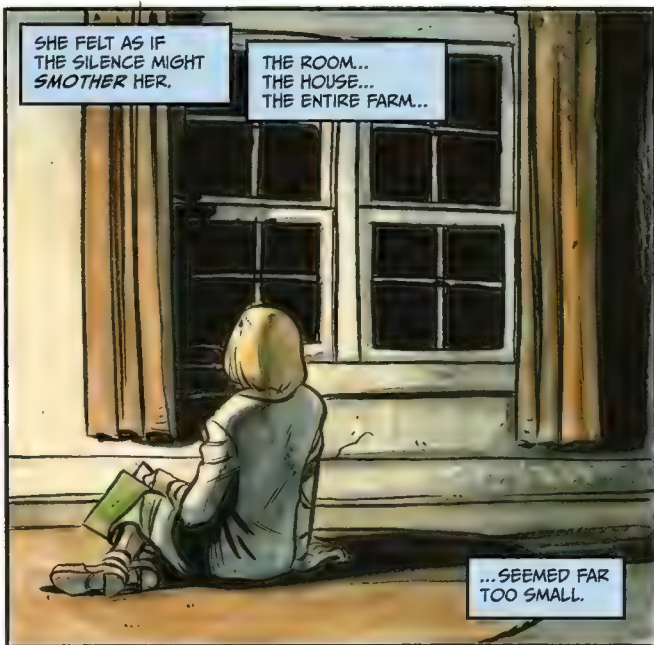
YOU IN SUCH A
HURRY TO GROW UP
AND LEAVE ME
ALL ALONE?



EMMY LET THE MATTER DROP,
AND THE *QUIET* RUSHED IN TO
FLOOD THE HOUSE.

THE *QUIET*.

EMMY SOMETIMES
THOUGHT OF IT AS
A LIVING, BREATHING
THING.



SHE FELT AS IF
THE SILENCE MIGHT
SMOTHER HER.

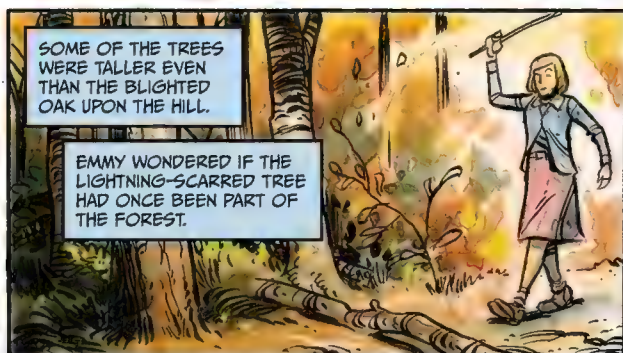
THE ROOM...
THE HOUSE...
THE ENTIRE FARM...

...SEEMED FAR
TOO SMALL.



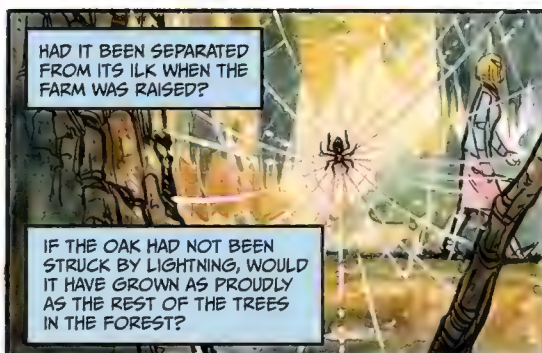
THE WOODS, ON THE OTHER HAND,
STRETCHED AWAY FROM THE FARM...

...AND INTO FOREVER.



SOME OF THE TREES
WERE TALLER EVEN
THAN THE BLIGHTED
OAK UPON THE HILL.

EMMY WONDERED IF THE
LIGHTNING-SCARRED TREE
HAD ONCE BEEN PART OF
THE FOREST.



HAD IT BEEN SEPARATED
FROM ITS ILK WHEN THE
FARM WAS RAISED?

IF THE OAK HAD NOT BEEN
STRUCK BY LIGHTNING, WOULD
IT HAVE GROWN AS PROUDLY
AS THE REST OF THE TREES
IN THE FOREST?



HAD THE OAK BEEN
CAST OUT FROM
THEIR RANKS?

THE TREES HERE WERE HEALTHY
AND TALL, NOT TWISTED AND
MEAN-SPIRITED AND CRUEL.



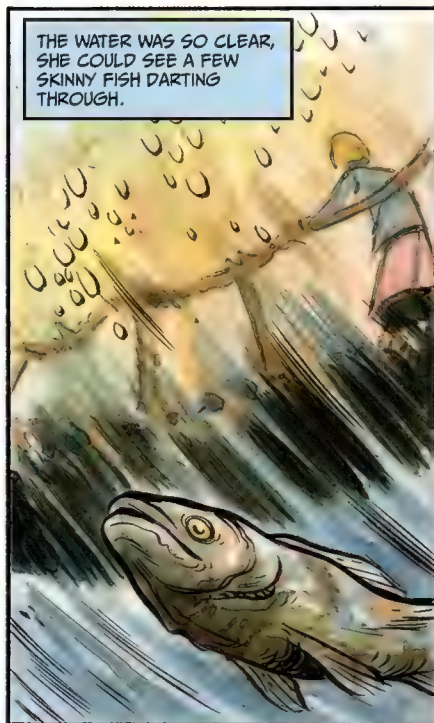
THEY NEEDED NOT TO
WHISPER SECRETS.

THE FOREST WAS SILENT
SAVE FOR THE RUSH OF
BREEZE THROUGH THE
LEAVES... AND THE
GURLING OF THE CREEK.

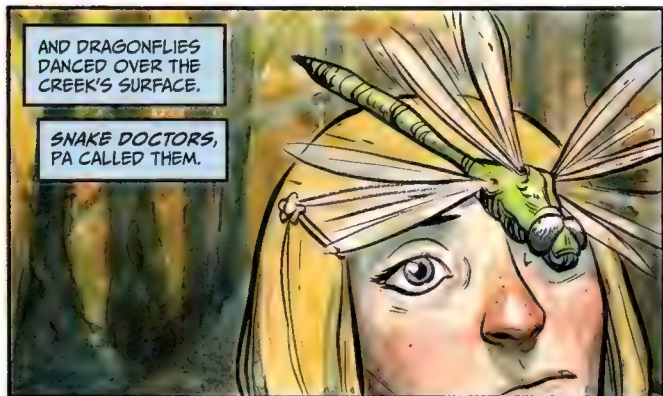


FOR AS LONG AS EMMY COULD REMEMBER, PA HAD PROMISED HE WAS GOING TO REPAIR THE OLD, ROTTING BRIDGE.

"SOMEONE'S GONNA FALL STRAIGHT THROUGH," HE'D SAY, "I DON'T TAKE HAMMER AND NAIL TO THEM TIMBERS."



THE WATER WAS SO CLEAR, SHE COULD SEE A FEW SKINNY FISH DARTING THROUGH.



AND DRAGONFLIES DANCED OVER THE CREEK'S SURFACE.

SNAKE DOCTORS, PA CALLED THEM.



WHENEVER YOU SAW ONE, YOU COULD BE SURE A COPPERHEAD OR WATER MOCCASIN LURKED NEARBY.

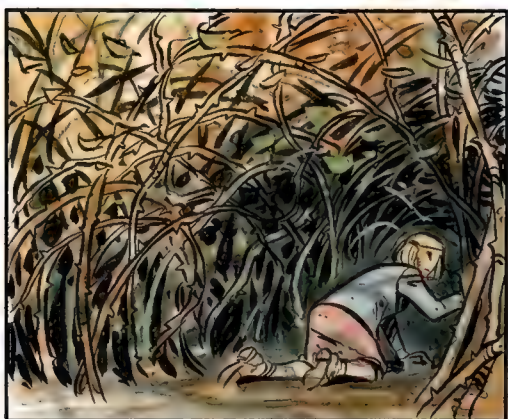


HEY, DOWN THERE!

WHAT ARE YOU DOING?





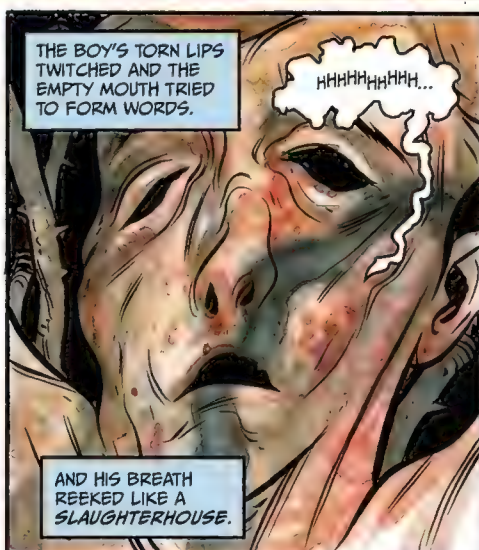




THE SKIN.
ONLY
THE SKIN.



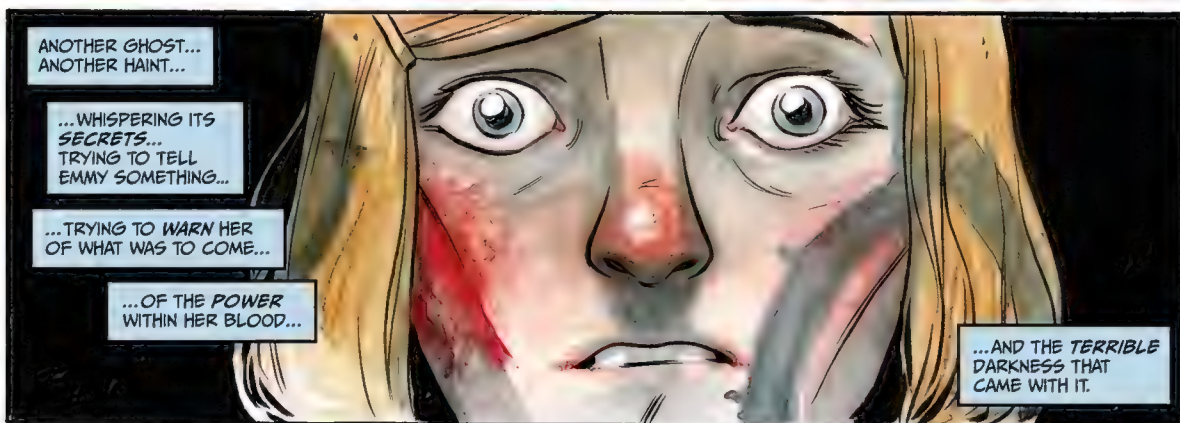
HHHHHHH...



THE BOY'S TORN LIPS
TWITCHED AND THE
EMPTY MOUTH TRIED
TO FORM WORDS.

HHHHHHHHH...

AND HIS BREATH
REEKED LIKE A
SLAUGHTERHOUSE.



ANOTHER GHOST...
ANOTHER HAINT...

...WHISPERING ITS
SECRETS...
TRYING TO TELL
EMMY SOMETHING...

...TRYING TO WARN HER
OF WHAT WAS TO COME...

...OF THE **POWER**
WITHIN HER BLOOD...

...AND THE **TERRIBLE**
DARKNESS THAT
CAME WITH IT.



TWO



BE STILL.

FOLDED UP LIKE THE SUNDAY
WASH, THE BOY'S SKIN
SQUIRMED IN EMMY'S ARMS.

BE STILL,
I SAID.

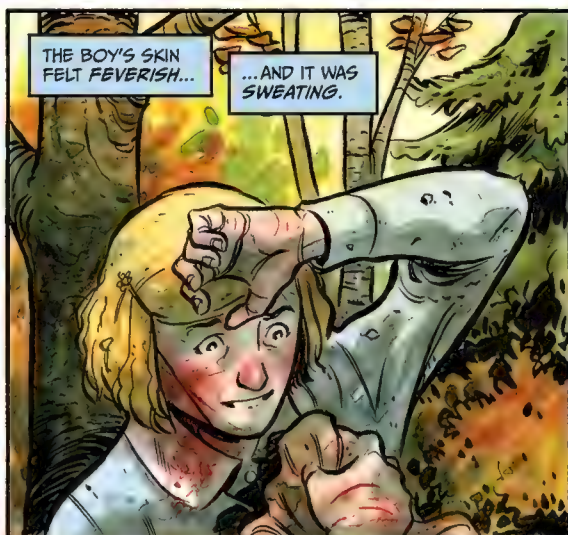
OR I'LL
WRAP YOU AROUND A
STONE AND CHUCK YOU
IN THE CREEK.

IT WRIGGLED AND
TWITCHED LIKE A
WILD THING TRYING
TO SLIP FREE.



THE BOY'S SKIN
FELT FEVERISH...

...AND IT WAS
SWEATING.

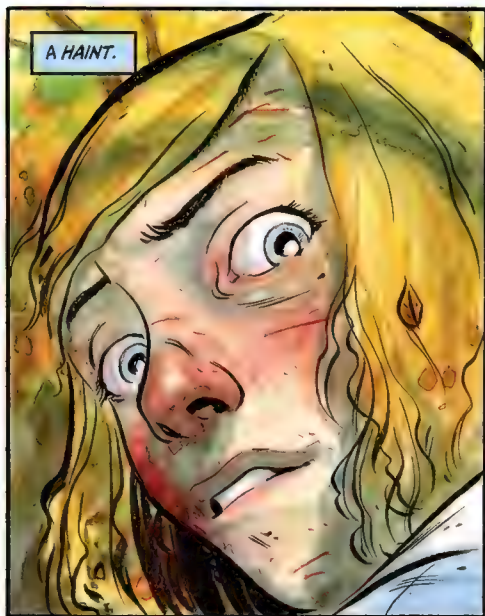


IT WAS PLAYING
AT BEING ALIVE.

BUT EMMY KNEW
WHAT SHE HAD FOUND.



A HAINT.

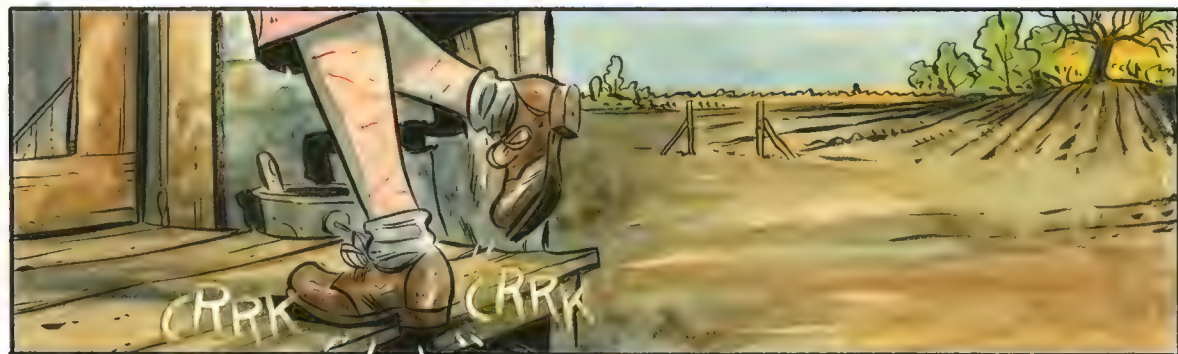


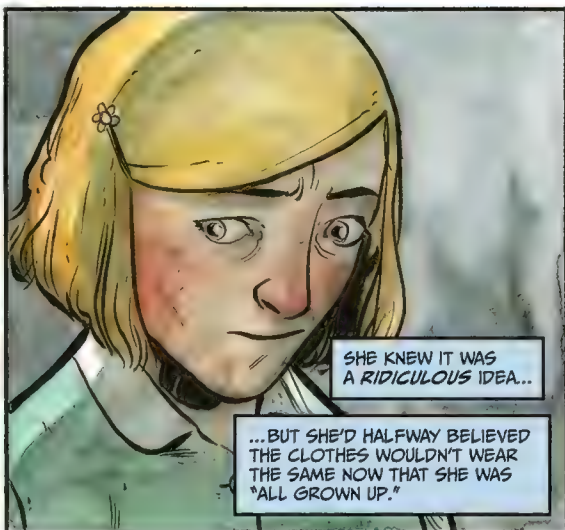
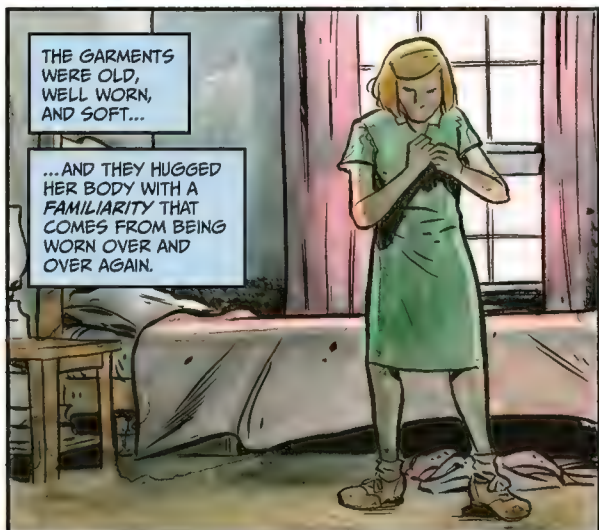
THE HOLLOWS AND THE MARSHES
AND OLD TOBACCO BARNs
CRAWLED WITH THEM...

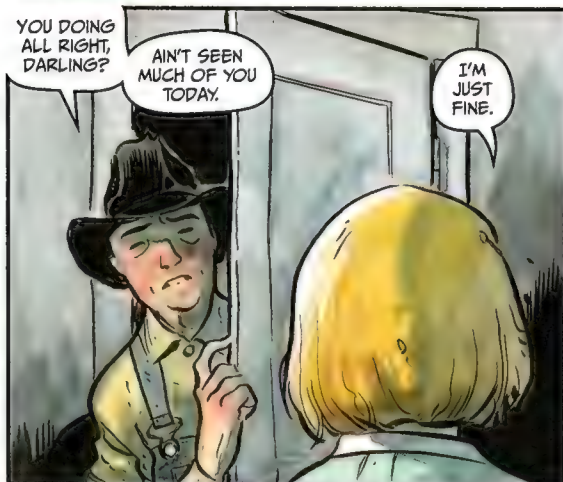


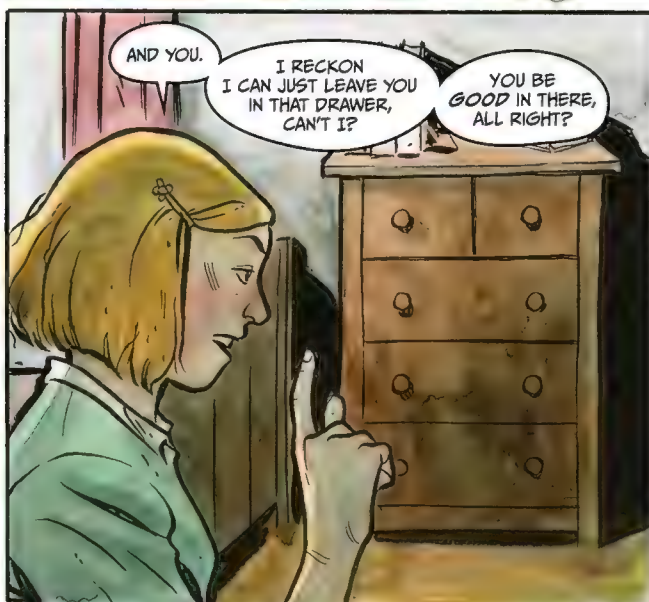
...DEATHLY PALE
AND GRAVELY SILENT.

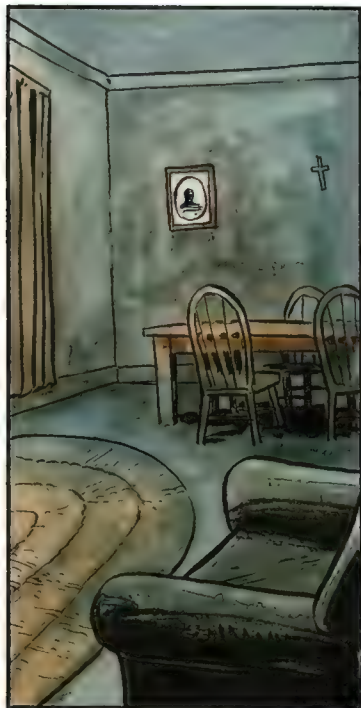
















IN EMMY'S DREAM, PEOPLE
GATHERED ROUND THE OLD
OAK ON THE HILL.

THEY WERE COLD AND QUIET...
LIKE HAINTS THEMSELVES.




WHEN THEY SPOKE, IT WAS
ONLY IN A HISSING WHISPER...

...AS IF THEY DIDN'T
WANT TO DISTURB
THE SLUMBERING TREE.



"IT CAN'T BE A GOOD THING,"
ONE OF THEM MURMURED.


"COMING BACK HERE...
TO THIS VERY PLACE...
AFTER WHAT WE DONE."



YOU
BEEN HEARING
THE CRY.

SAME
AS THE REST
OF US.

LIKE
A BABY.



AND SO THEY CHOPPED
AWAY AT THE SWOLLEN
TREE TRUNK...

...UNTIL THEY FOUND WHAT
THEY WERE LOOKING FOR.



LORDY!
WOULD YOU LOOK
AT THAT!

SHE'S
JUST A...

SHE'S
BEAUTIFUL.



PULL
HER OUT OF
THERE!

WE CAN
TAKE HER
HOME!

WE CAN--

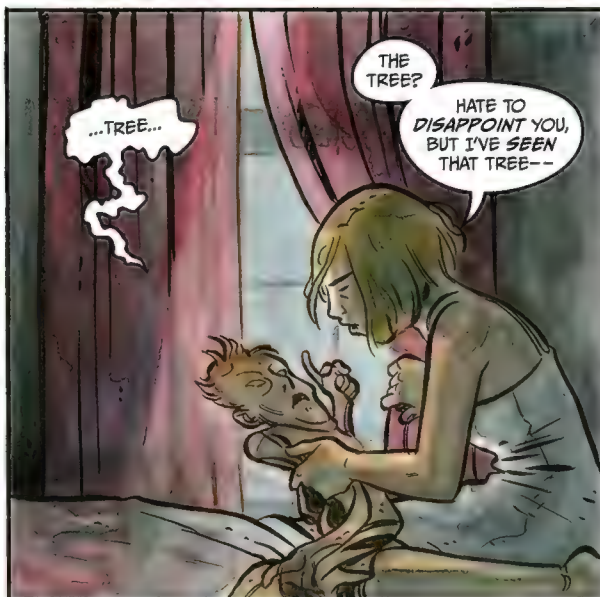


HOLD ON,
NOW!
THERE'S
ANOTHER
ONE!

LOOK!

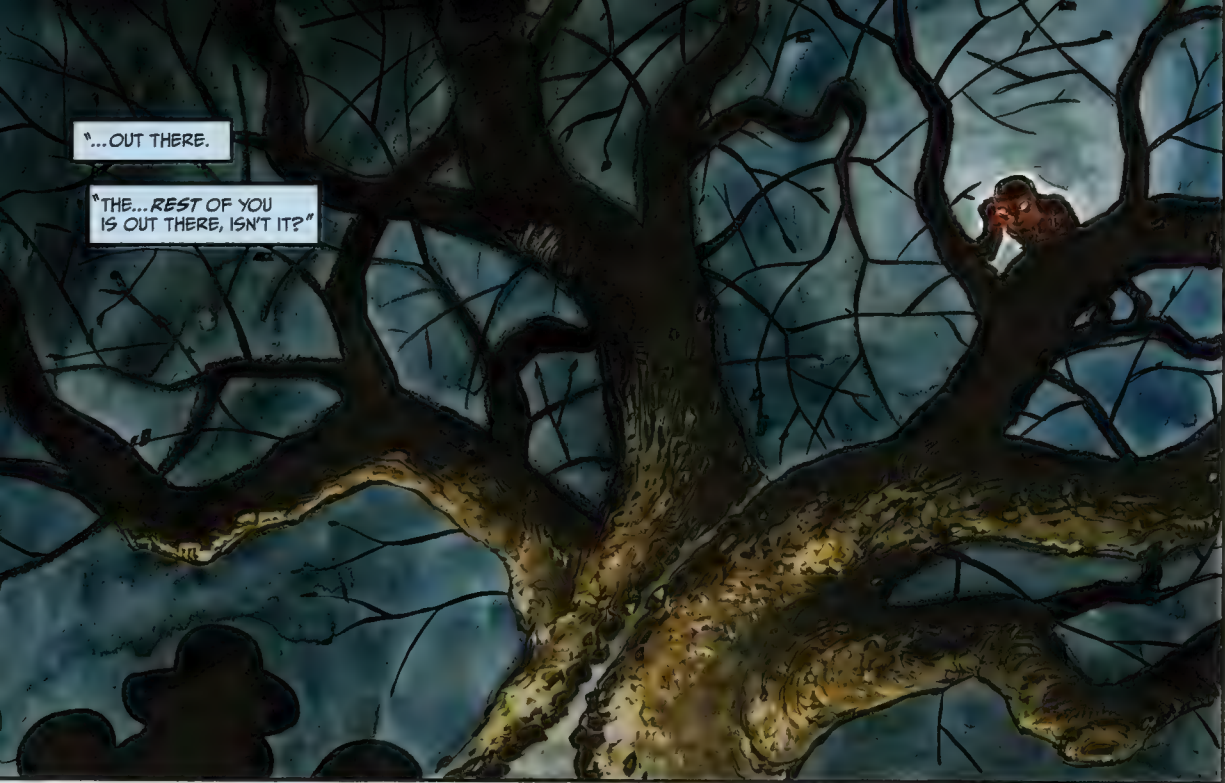


LOOKS
JUST LIKE
HER!



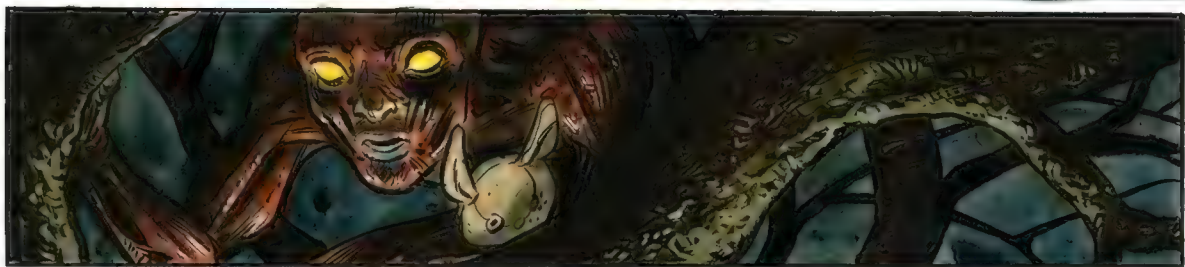






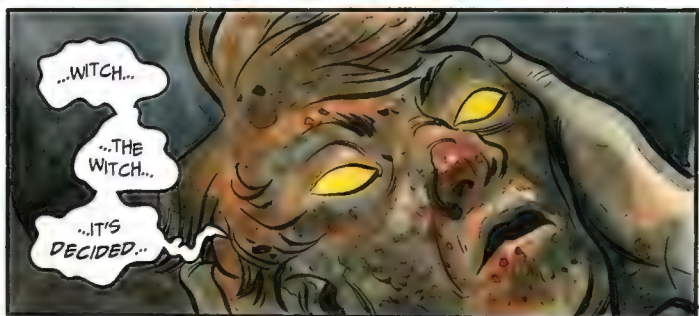
"...OUT THERE.

"THE... *REST* OF YOU
IS OUT THERE, ISN'T IT?"



YOUR BODY...
YOUR EYES...
YOUR EARS.

IT'S OUT
THERE HIDING IN
THE TREE... AND WHATEVER
IT SEES AND HEARS,
SO DO YOU.



...WITCH...

...THE
WITCH...

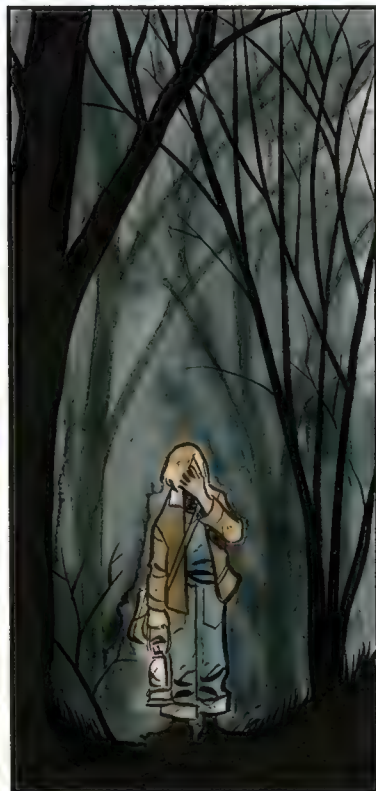
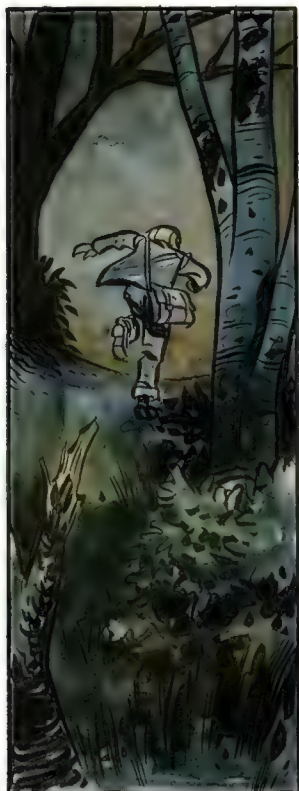
...IT'S
DECIDED...

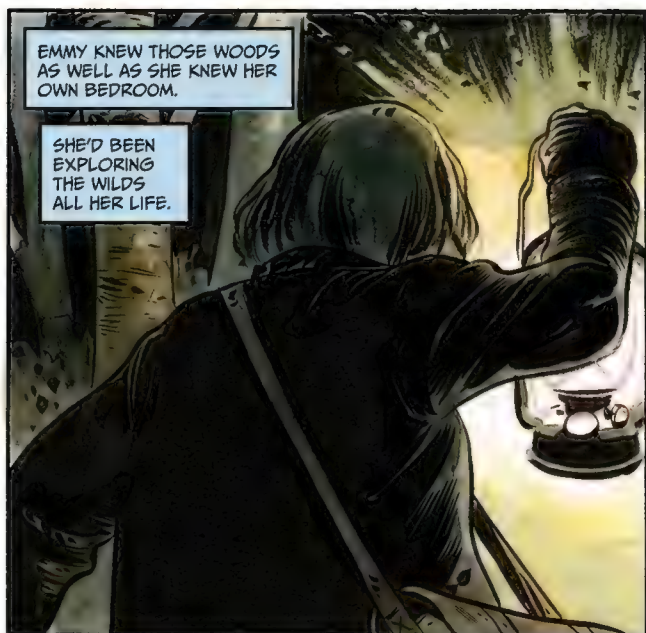


...THE
WITCH...

...MUST
DIE!







EMMY KNEW THOSE WOODS
AS WELL AS SHE KNEW HER
OWN BEDROOM.

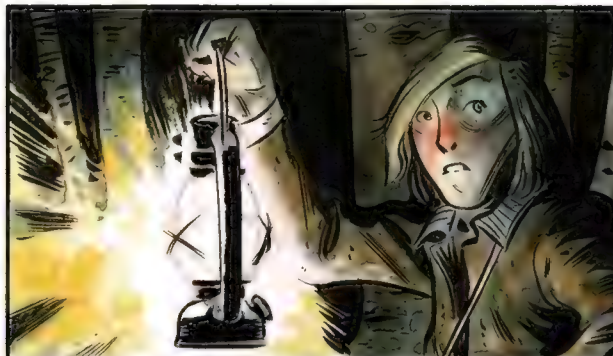
SHE'D BEEN
EXPLORING
THE WILDS
ALL HER LIFE.



...THE HOLLOWS
WHERE SHE CHASED
SQUIRRELS...

...THE MUDDY SWIMMING
HOLES WHERE SHE
COOLED OFF ON HOT
DAYS...

...THE BROOKS
WHERE SHE
SKIPPED STONES
OR SCOOPED
CRAWDADS...



NOW...
IN THE DARK...
WITH HER FATHER
POSSIBLY WANTING
TO KILL HER...

CRUNCH!
SNAP!
CRUNCH!

...NOTHING
SEEMED
FAMILIAR.



"THE WITCH,"
THEY HAD SAID,
"MUST DIE."

BUT SHE WAS
NO WITCH...
NO MONSTER.

SNAP!
CRUNCH!
KRAK!



NOW... MORE THAN EVER...
SHE FELT LIKE A CHILD...

WHO'S
THERE?

...LOST IN THE WOODS...
FRIGHTENED AND...





COME ON.
WE'D BEST KEEP
MOVING.

THEY REALIZE
YOU'RE GONE, THEY'RE
GONNA COME AFTER
YOU.



AFTER
US BOTH NOW,
I RECKON.



I DON'T
KNOW THAT I
GOT ANSWERS...
LEAST NOT GOOD
ONES.

I HEARD MY
GRANDPA TALKING
TO SOME PEOPLE,
THOUGH.

I THINK
THEY WERE FOLK
FROM TOWN.



ONLY HEARD
BITS AND
PIECES...

...ABOUT
WITCHCRAFT...
AND A BIRTHING...

...AND SOME
SORT OF AGREEMENT
THAT THEY HAD
TO KILL YOU.



I WASN'T
SURE WHAT TO
DO, REALLY.

BUT I RECKON I
COULDN'T JUST LET YOU
GET YOURSELF
MURDERED...

...NOT
WITHOUT LETTING
YOU KNOW IT WAS
A-COMING.



BERNICE -- WAIT.
WHERE ARE WE?

I DON'T KNOW
THAT I'VE BEEN
IN THIS PART OF
THE WOODS
BEFORE.

BUT THERE'S
SOMETHING...





THE
UNDESIRABLES?



DID YOU...

...LEAD
ME HERE ON
PURPOSE?



WHAT
DID YOU
SAY?

DO YOU
THINK... I'M TRYING
TO DO YOU WRONG?

I CAME
OUT HERE TO
HELP YOU!



I...
I'M SORRY.

I JUST
DON'T KNOW
WHAT TO
THINK.



...NOT
ALONE...

...UH...

DID YOUR
SATCHEL JUST
TALK?



...NOT
ALONE...

HUSH.

DON'T
TELL ME WHAT
I ALREADY
KNOW.

BERNICE
IS HERE... AND
SO ARE YOU.



...NOOOOOO...

...NOT
ALONE...

...NEVER...

...NEVER
ALONE...



FACELESS AND SILENT, THE GHOSTS
STOOD BEHIND THE GRAVE MARKERS,
ONE SPIRIT FOR EVERY STONE.



THEY MADE NO SOUND...
AND THEIR FACES WERE
AS BARREN AS THE
GRAVESTONES.

EMMY WONDERED IF THEY
HAD ONCE WORN FACES...

...FACES WITH EARS
AND EYES AND NOSES
AND MOUTHS...

...FACES THAT FRIENDS AND
FAMILY MIGHT RECOGNIZE...

EMMY...
THEY'RE COMING
CLOSER!

...FACES THAT HAD FADED AS
THE GRAVESTONE EPITAPHS
HAD DULLED WITH UNKIND YEARS.

THE--
THE
LANTERNS!

DON'T
LET THEM
TOUCH YOU!



THAT'S
CLOSE
ENOUGH.

STOP RIGHT
THERE.



ALTHOUGH LITTLE MORE
THAN A WHISPER, EMMY'S
WORDS SEEMED TO
THUNDER IN THE DARK.



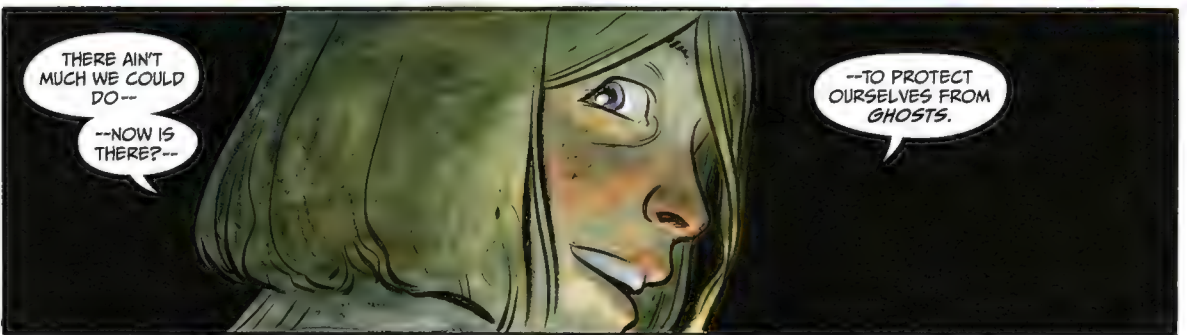
WHAT
ARE THEY
DOING?

THEY JUST
STOPPED!



I DON'T
THINK THEY WANT
TO HURT US
NOHOW.

IF THEY
WANTED TO DO
US HARM, THEY WOULD
HAVE GOTTEN IT OVER
WITH ALREADY.



THERE AIN'T
MUCH WE COULD
DO--

--NOW IS
THERE?--

--TO PROTECT
OURSELVES FROM
GHOSTS.



SO
MAYBE THEY
JUST WANT TO
SCARE US.

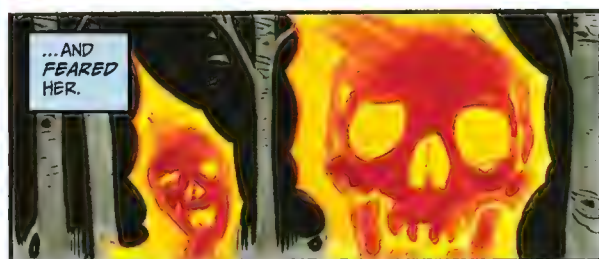
IS
THAT IT?

NOW THAT
YOU'RE DEAD, YOU
AIN'T GOT NOTHING
BETTER TO DO THAN
SPOOK PEOPLE?

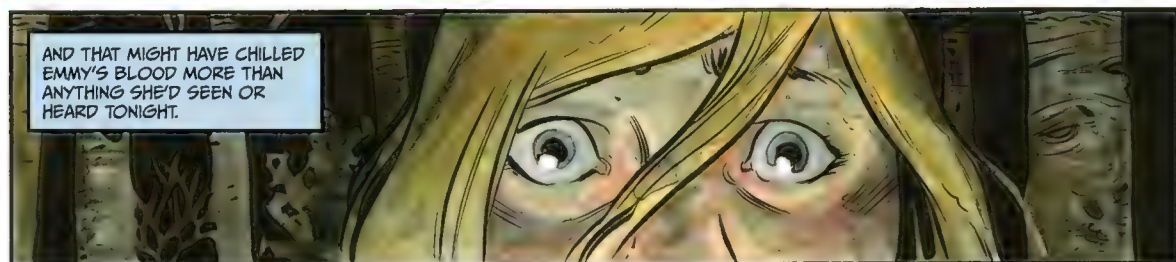


A RIPPLE SEEMED
TO PASS THROUGH
THE GRAVE WIGHTS...

...LIKE THE LONG-DEAD
SOULS SENSED EMMY'S
ANGER...



...AND
FEARED
HER.



AND THAT MIGHT HAVE CHILLED
EMMY'S BLOOD MORE THAN
ANYTHING SHE'D SEEN OR
HEARD TONIGHT.



WE...

WE SHOULD GET
GOING NOW.



A FURROW OF SUBTLE
MOVEMENT PASSED
THROUGH THE
SPECTRAL FIGURES...

...THE WAY
GOOSE FLESH
MIGHT SPREAD
ACROSS SKIN.





THEY SIMPLY FLOWED BACK
TO THEIR POSITION BEHIND
THE GRAVESTONES AND WATCHED.



IT WASN'T UNTIL LATER THAT EMMY WOULD
REALIZE THE SPIRITS HAD BEEN TRYING
TO PROTECT HER FROM WHAT LAY AHEAD.

BY THAT TIME, THEY
WOULDN'T BE THERE
TO HELP HER.



IF THEY HAD MOUTHS...
OR BREATH TO FORM
WORDS... THEY MIGHT
HAVE TOLD HER.



*NOT THAT WAY.

*WHATEVER
YOU DO...



"...DON'T GO THAT WAY."



WHAT WAS THAT?



HAINTS, I RECKON.



I KNOW WHAT THEY WERE.

MY MEANING IS... WHY'D THEY JUST LET US GO LIKE THAT?



FRIENDLY HAINTS?





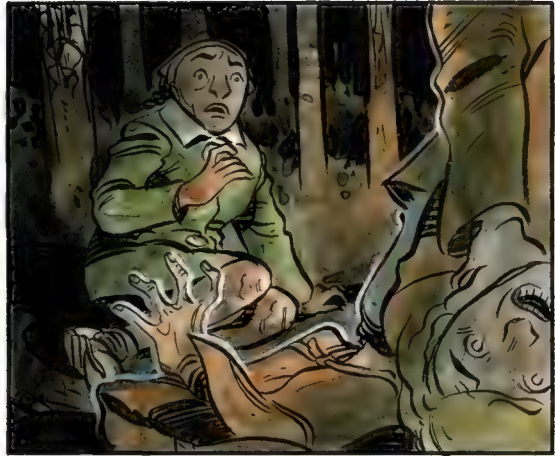
















THE SKINLESS BOY HAD BEEN KEEPING A WATCHFUL EYE ON EMMY.

WHU...

AND NOW... SEEING HER IN DANGER... ATTACKED.



IT WAS AN ANGRY, FEROCIOUS THING...

N-NO!

...STRONGER BY FAR THAN ANY SIX MEN.



AS THE SKINLESS BOY CLAWED AND SNAPPED AT ITS VICTIM, THE TATTERED SKIN CRIED WEIRDLY.

...AWAY FROM HER...

...DON'T YOU TOUCH HER...

...UNDER OUR PROTECTION...



FOR AN INSTANT, EMMY CONSIDERED LETTING THE CREATURE DO ITS WORK.

HER FATHER HAD TRIED TO KILL HER... WOULD LIKELY TRY TO DO SO AGAIN IF HE LIVED.

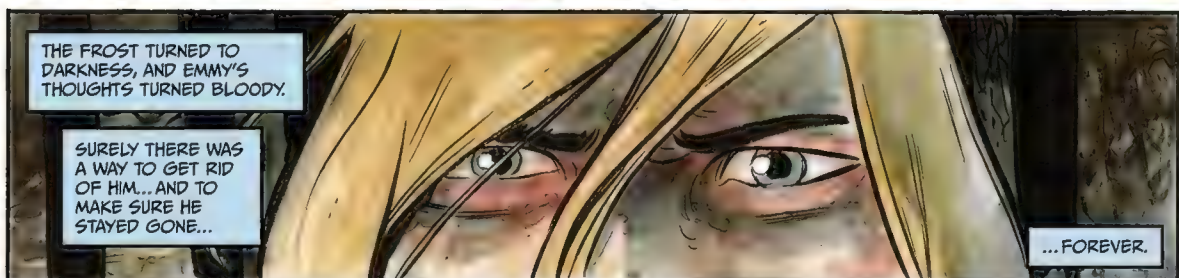
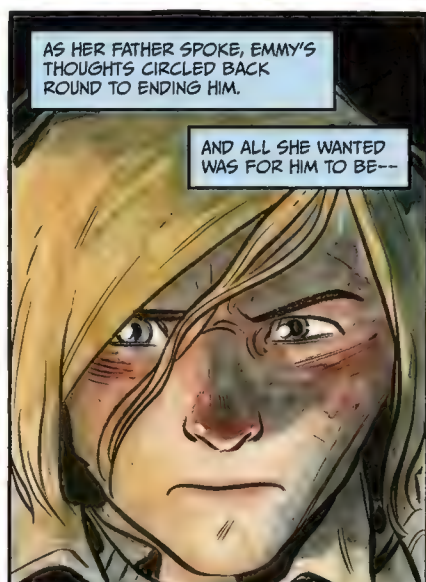


IT WOULD BE SO EASY...

...TO CLAIM SHE COULDN'T SPEAK AFTER THE ASSAULT.











THE BRIEF DARKNESS EMMY
HAD FELT RECEDED, LEAVING
EMPTYNESS IN ITS WAKE.

SHOCK AND SADNESS
FILLED THE VOID.



AND WHEN IT
OVERFLOWED...
SHE WEPT.

THAT
ISN'T ME.

THAT
ISN'T WHO
I WANT TO
BE.



YET THOSE DARK THOUGHTS HAD
COME SO NATURALLY TO HER.


THEY HAD
FELT RIGHT.



THE WOODS WERE
FULL OF TWISTED,
EVIL THINGS.

COUNTLESS
HAINTS.

IT TERRIFIED EMMY
TO THINK...



...THAT HER OWN THOUGHTS
MARKED HER AS ONE OF THEM.

BUT SHE OUGHT NOT TO
HAVE WORRIED HERSELF..

... BECAUSE THERE ARE SOME
CREATURES DWELLING IN THOSE
DARK AND LONELY PLACES...

...THAT WOULDN'T
NEVER ACCEPT HER...

... AND WOULD JUST AS
SOON KILL THE GIRL AS
LAY EYES UPON HER.

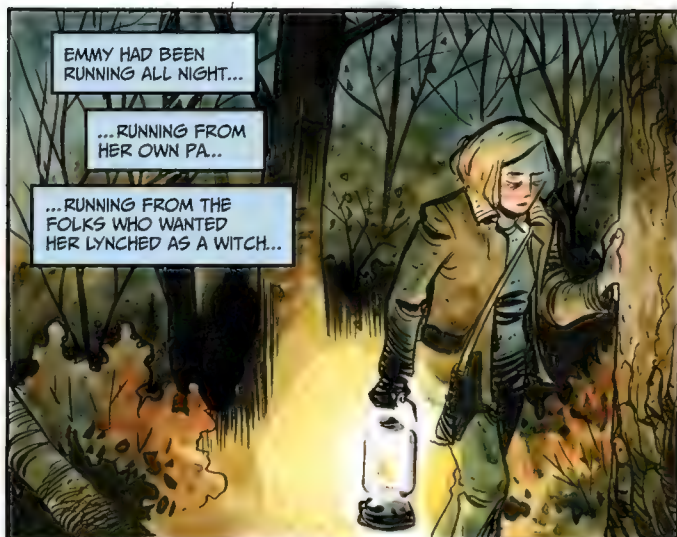


62

FOUR



NOT AGAIN.



EMMY HAD BEEN
RUNNING ALL NIGHT...

...RUNNING FROM
HER OWN PA...

...RUNNING FROM THE
FOLKS WHO WANTED
HER LYNCHED AS A WITCH...



...AND RUNNING FROM
THE POSSIBILITY THAT
SHE DESERVED KILLING.

...HSSSS...



...CAREFUL...

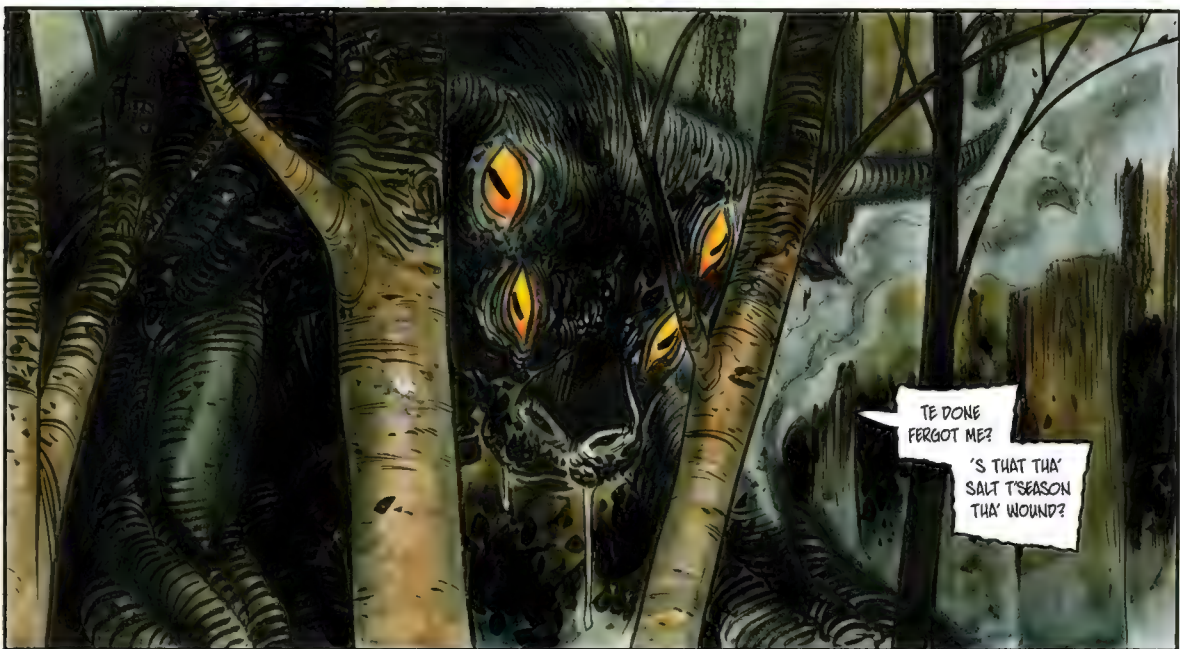
...SOMETHING'S
COMING...

...SOMETHING
OLD...



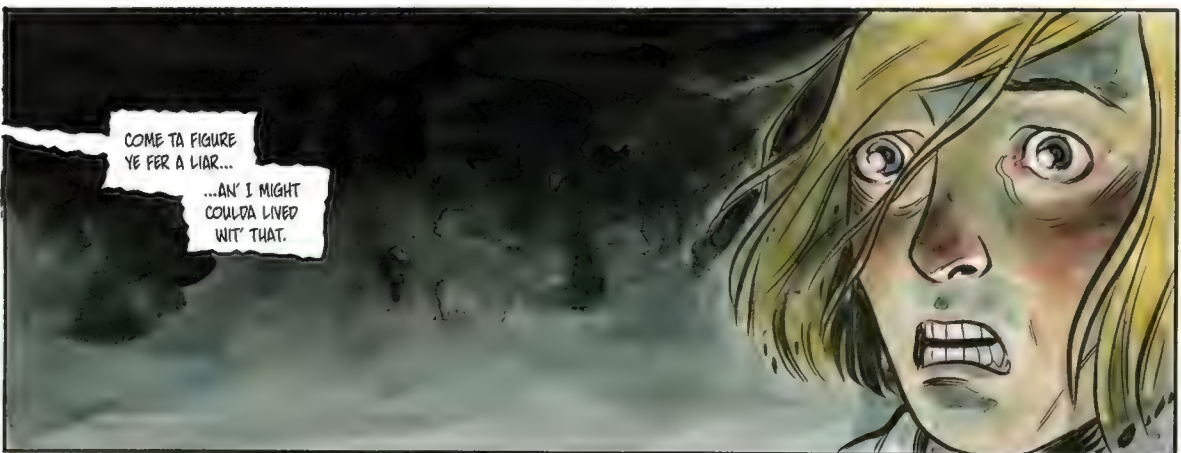
W-WHO...

WHO'S OUT
THERE?



TE DONE
FERGOT ME?

'S THAT THA
SALT T'SEASON
THA' WOUND?





BUT YE
FERGOT ME!



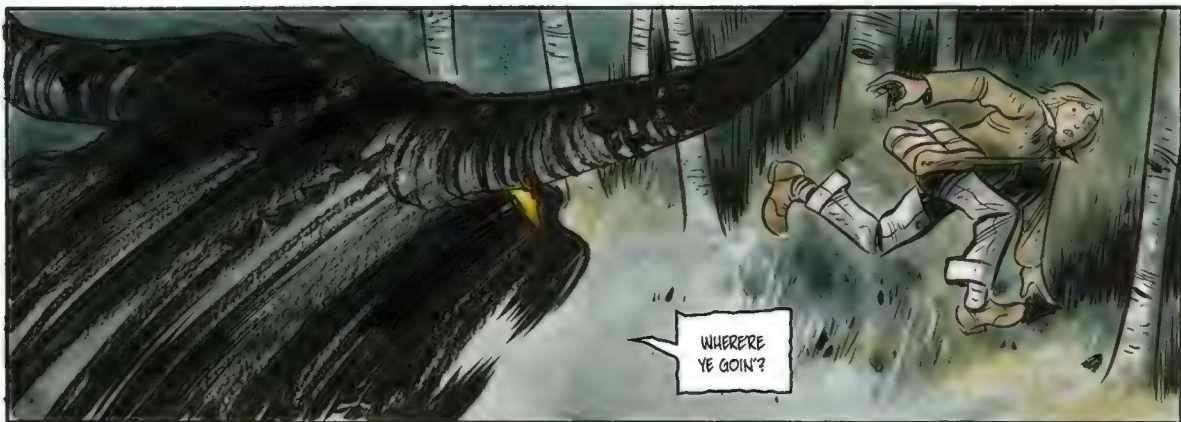
NOW I GOTS
TA MAKE YE
R'MEMBER!

NOW
YE'RE
HERE...

...I'LL LEARN
YE NEVER TA
FERGET AGAIN!



N-NO!
SHHNE
LEAVE ME
ALONE!



WHERE'RE
YE GOIN'?



COME BACK
HERE!



DON'T YE
LEAVE ME...

...AGAIN.



EMMY'S LEGS TREMBLED
WITH EXHAUSTION.

HER HEART SLAMMED
IN HER CHEST.

SHE COULD BARELY
DRAW A BREATH.



THIS...
THIS AIN'T...

...HOW NO
WITCH WOULD
FEEL!



BUT SHE DIDN'T
DARE STOP.

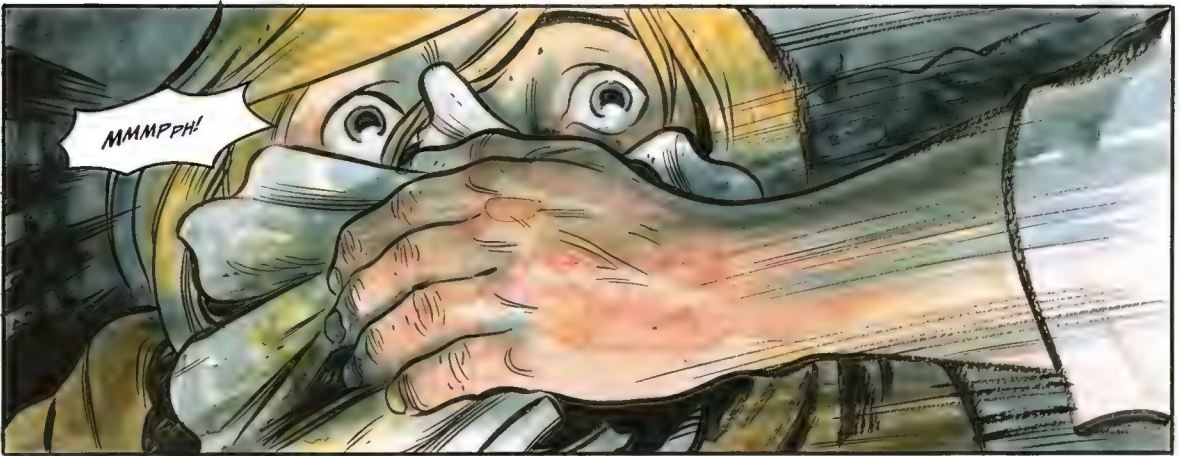
SHE COULDN'T IMAGINE
IT POSSIBLE THAT SHE'D
RUN FAR ENOUGH...

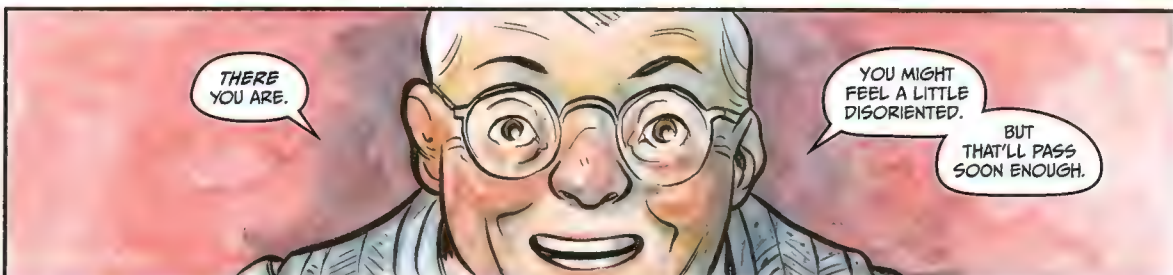


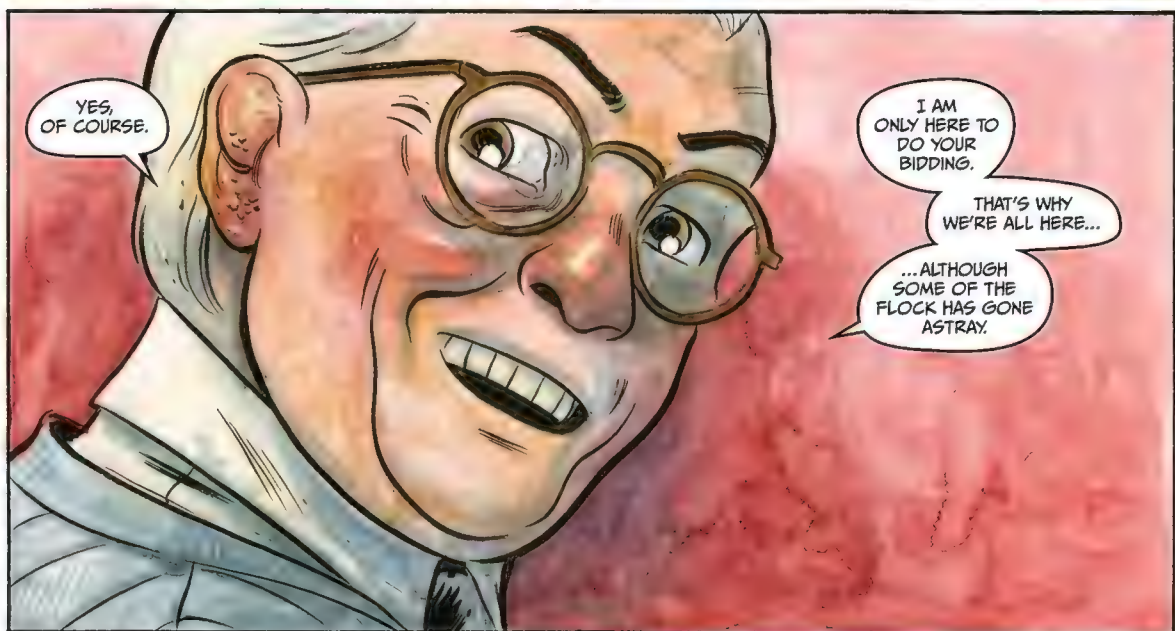
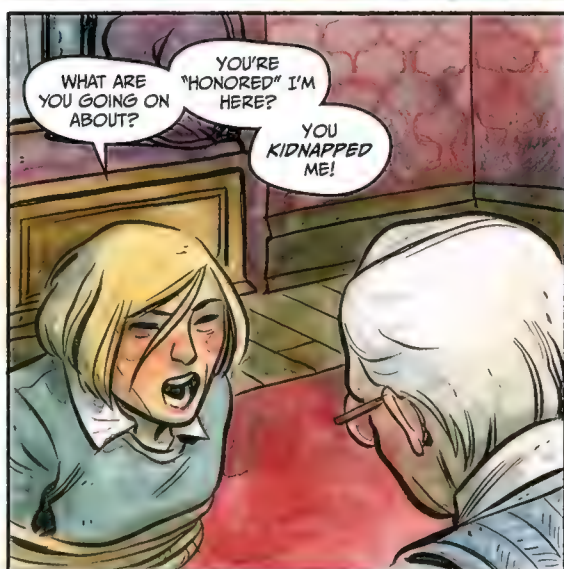
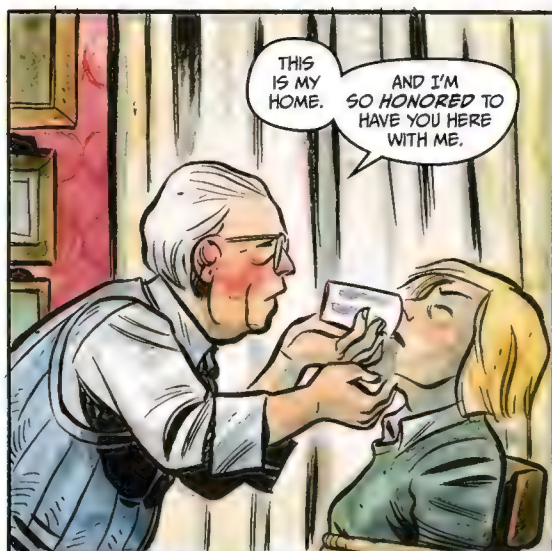
...THAT SHE'D EVER
FEEL SAFE WITH THE
NOTION OF STOPPING.











"YOU'RE HER, YOU UNDERSTAND.
YOU'RE HESTER BECK *REBORN*."

"I THINK YOU REALIZE
THAT MUCH NOW."

"YOU MAY LOOK DIFFERENT...
BUT YOU'RE THE SAME WOMAN
WHO WAS BIRTHED UP FROM
THE BOWELS OF THE EARTH
ALL THOSE YEARS AGO."



"WHEN HESTER FIRST APPEARED
AMONG THE FOLKS OF HARROW
COUNTY, SHE WAS *NOT* WELCOMED."

"IF SHE OFFERED TO HEAL
THE SICK, THEY RECOILED
FROM HER TOUCH."

"IF SHE DELIVERED
A SERMON, THEY
REFUSED TO LISTEN."



"SHE TOOK TO
THE WOODS..."

"...AND THERE, IN ORDER
TO KEEP COMPANY, SHE
CALLED UP THE HAINTS
FROM THE DARK PLACES."



"EVEN THOUGH THE GHOSTS
AND GOBLINS PROTECTED
HER...EVEN THOUGH THEY
OBEYED HER EVERY WHIM..."

"...SHE STILL
FELT ALONE."

"AND SO SHE SET ABOUT
SHAPING NEW FOLLOWERS
FOR HERSELF."



"SHE RAISED MEN
AND WOMEN FROM
THE MUD...

"...EACH ONE EVERY
BIT AS HUMAN...
EVERY BIT A LIVING
THING... AS THE
PEOPLE WHO HAD
REJECTED HER.

"SHE SENT THEM
OUT TO LIVE AMONG
THE COUNTY FOLK...

"...TO SERVE HER
INTERESTS... AND
SPREAD WORD OF
HER KINDNESS...

"...AND SHE BLESSED THEM
WITH *FREE WILL* SO THAT
THEY MIGHT CHERISH THE
LIFE SHE HAD GIVEN THEM.

"BUT FREE WILL
HAS A WAY OF
TURNING THE SHEEP
INTO WOLVES...

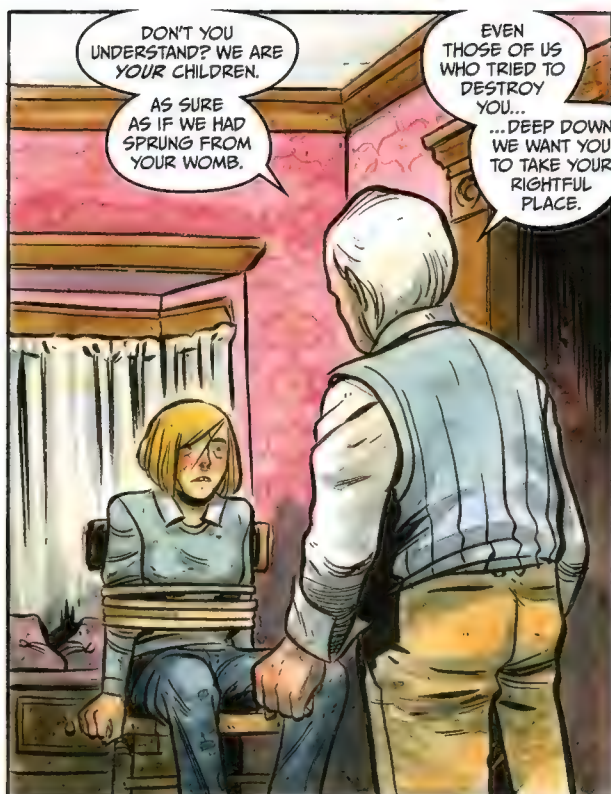
"...OF TWISTING FAITH AND
LOYALTY INTO HATE AND FEAR...

"...AND A WHISPER OF
DISSENT PASSED AMONG
SOME OF HER CREATIONS.

"SOME OF THEM GENUINELY
BELIEVED HESTER WAS A
CREATURE OF EVIL...

"...AND SOME OF THEM
THOUGHT THEY WOULD
NEVER TRULY BE ALIVE
UNTIL THEIR CREATOR
WAS DEAD.

"EITHER WAY... THEY WERE
AS COLD TO THEIR MOTHER...
AS CRUEL... AS HAIN'TS."



DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND? WE ARE YOUR CHILDREN.

AS SURE AS IF WE HAD SPRUNG FROM YOUR WOMB.

EVEN THOSE OF US WHO TRIED TO DESTROY YOU...

...DEEP DOWN WE WANT YOU TO TAKE YOUR RIGHTFUL PLACE.



I... I THINK I MIGHT...

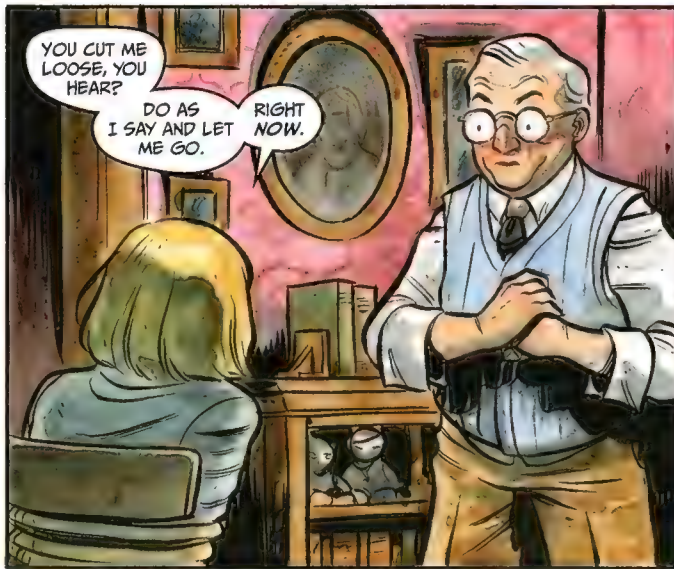
...BELIEVE YOU.

THAT'S HOW I CONTROLLED THOSE GHOSTS.

THAT'S HOW I CONTROLLED PA.



AND THAT'S HOW I CONTROL YOU.



YOU CUT ME LOOSE, YOU HEAR?

DO AS I SAY AND LET ME GO.

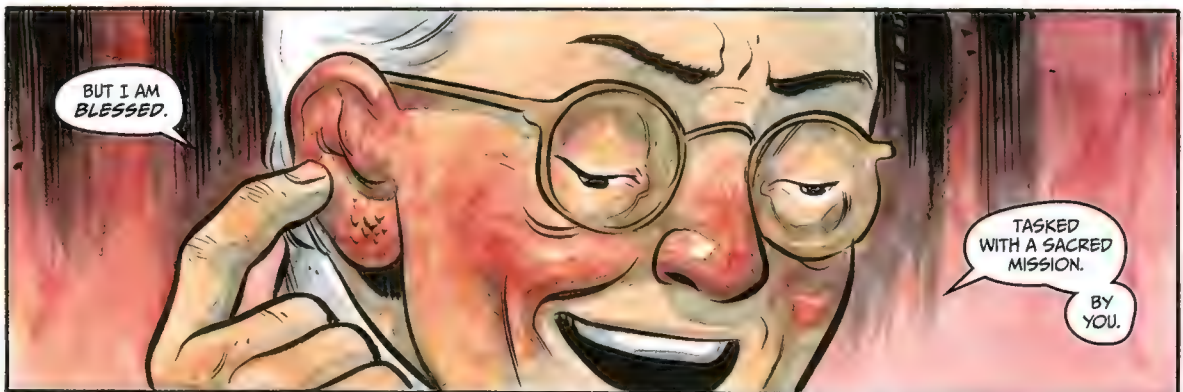
RIGHT NOW.



THAT'S THE SPIRIT, CHILD.

I COULD SENSE IT IN YOUR WORDS.

YOU KNOW WHO YOU ARE.



BUT I AM BLESSED.

TASKED WITH A SACRED MISSION.

BY YOU.



"HESTER WARNED ME THAT THIS DAY MIGHT COME."

"SHE TOLD ME WHAT I'D NEED TO DO."



"...IF I DON'T REMEMBER...
IF I DON'T KNOW
WHO I AM..."

"...IT'LL BE YOUR JOB
TO REMIND ME WHEN THE
AWAKENING COMES..."

"...AND LET NO
ONE DISSUADE YOU
FROM YOUR
TASK..."

"...NOT
EVEN ME."



"AT THE TIME, I DIDN'T FULLY
UNDERSTAND WHAT HESTER..."

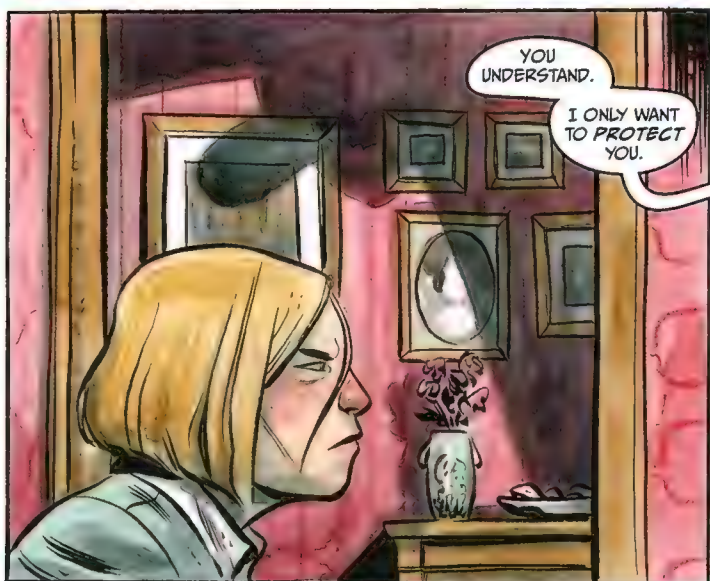
"...WHAT YOU WERE
TELLING ME."

"I'M JUST A SERVITOR
AND NOT WORTHY OF
TRUE AWARENESS."



"WHEN I SAW
THEM KILL HER..."

"I THOUGHT I HAD
MISSED SOMETHING...
THAT I HAD FAILED."





"...AND WHAT I AM."



WHERE
COULD SHE HAVE
GONE?

...LET
HER SLIP
AWAY...

SHE'S HIDING
SOMEWHERE.

...PLACES
IN THEM WOODS
NOBODY'S EVER
SEEN.

COULD
SHE KNOW?



YOU'RE NOT
LISTENING TO WHAT
I'M SAYING.

EMMY COULD
HAVE KILLED ME IF
SHE WANTED. BUT SHE
LET ME GO.

SHE MIGHT
HAVE COME FROM
THE WITCH... BUT SHE
AIN'T THE SAME.

WE
MIGHT BE
ABLE TO--



NOW.
IT'S TOO LATE
NOW.

SHE KNOWS
WE WANT HER DEAD...
AND SHE'LL WANT TO
TREAT US IN KIND.

SHE'S LIKELY
HIDING WITH THEM
WHO STILL WORSHIP
HER.



THAT'S
WHERE WE SHOULD
LOOK NEXT--

DON'T TROUBLE
YOURSELVES.





I KNOW
THE TRUTH
NOW.

CAN'T SAY
I'VE MADE SENSE
OF IT ALL.

BUT I
ACCEPT
IT.



NOW I'VE
COME TO ASK
THE SAME OF
YOU.



I
NEED YOU TO
ACCEPT THAT I'M NOT
THE WOMAN YOU
KILLED.



I WASN'T
RAISED TO BE
LIKE HER.



I JUST
WANT...
...WELL,
I DON'T
KNOW...

...SEEING HOW
I AIN'T BARELY HAD
THE CHANCE TO FIGURE
THAT OUT...

...BUT I GUESS
A NORMAL LIFE IS
A GOOD PLACE
TO START.



MAYBE
THAT'S ALL
ANY OF YOU
WANT.

I SUPPOSE
YOU THOUGHT
KILLING HESTER
BECK MIGHT GIVE
YOU A CHANCE
AT THAT.

AND WHEN
I WAS BORN...
WELL... I CAN'T
BLAME YOU FOR
BEING SCARED.



I'M NOT
HESTER,
THOUGH.

THAT
WASN'T THE
NAME I WAS
GIVEN.



I DON'T
WANT TO HURT
ANYONE...

...NOT
YOU...

...NOT
THE OTHER
FOLKS WHO LIVE
HEREABOUTS.



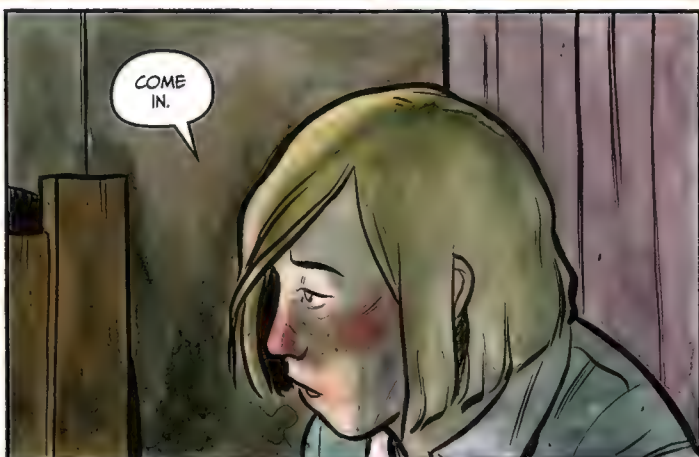
IT'S A
TRICK.

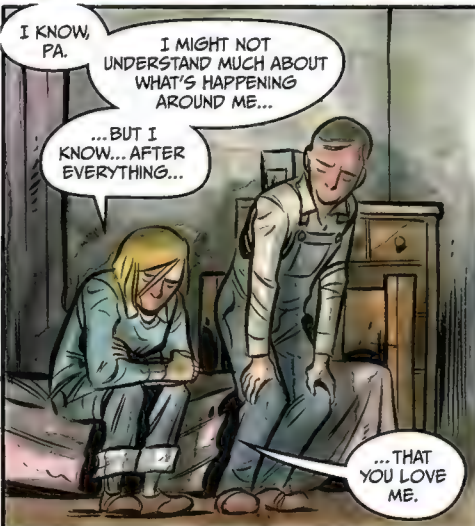
WE'VE HEARD THESE
WORDS BEFORE.



BETTER TO
BE DONE WITH
HER AND START
THE CYCLE--



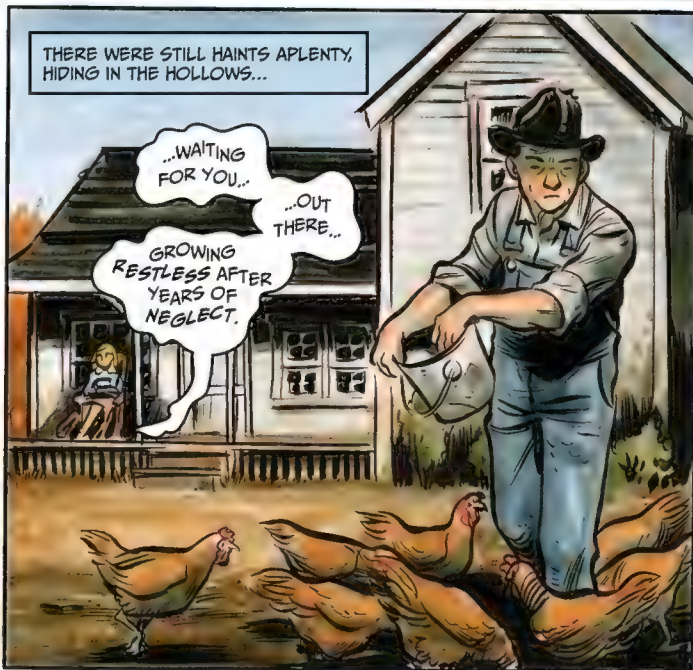






IT TOOK SOME TIME...
BUT EVENTUALLY LIFE
SETTLED DOWN AND
RETURNED TO NORMAL...

...AT LEAST... AS NEAR TO
NORMAL AS POSSIBLE IN
HARROW COUNTY.



THERE WERE STILL HAUNTS APLENTY,
HIDING IN THE HOLLOWS...

...WAITING
FOR YOU...

...OUT
THERE...

GROWING
RESTLESS AFTER
YEARS OF
NEGLECT.

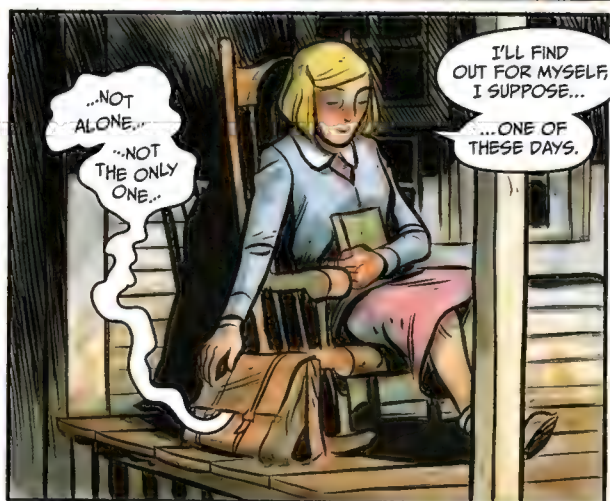


WOULD THEY SENSE
EMMY'S NEWFOUND
UNDERSTANDING?

WOULD THEY SEEK
HER OUT FOR GUIDANCE...



...OR FOR SOME
DARKER PURPOSE?



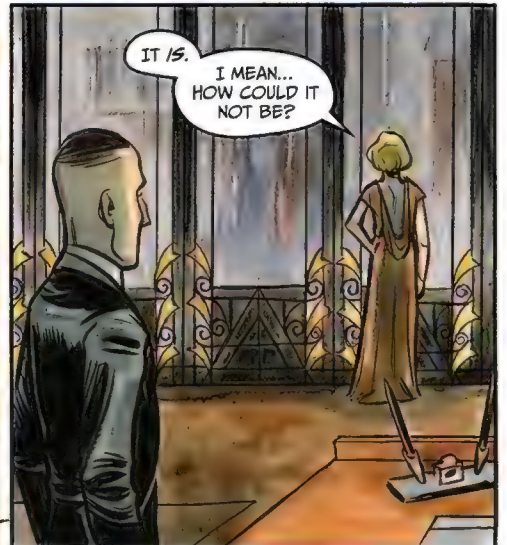
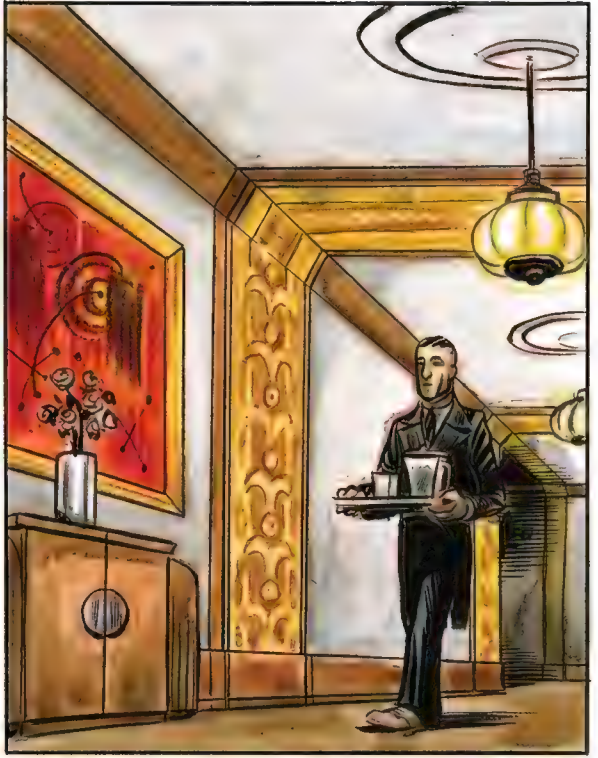
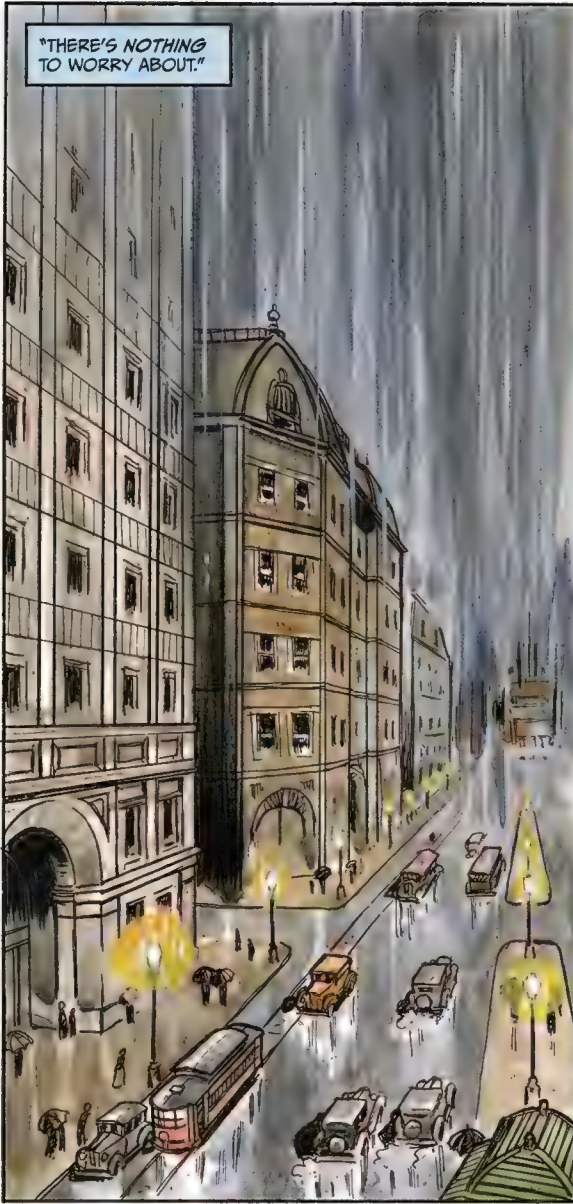
...NOT
ALONE...

...NOT
THE ONLY
ONE...

I'LL FIND
OUT FOR MYSELF,
I SUPPOSE...

...ONE OF
THESE DAYS.





AFTER
ALL...

...THIS
IS ALL MINE,
ISN'T IT?

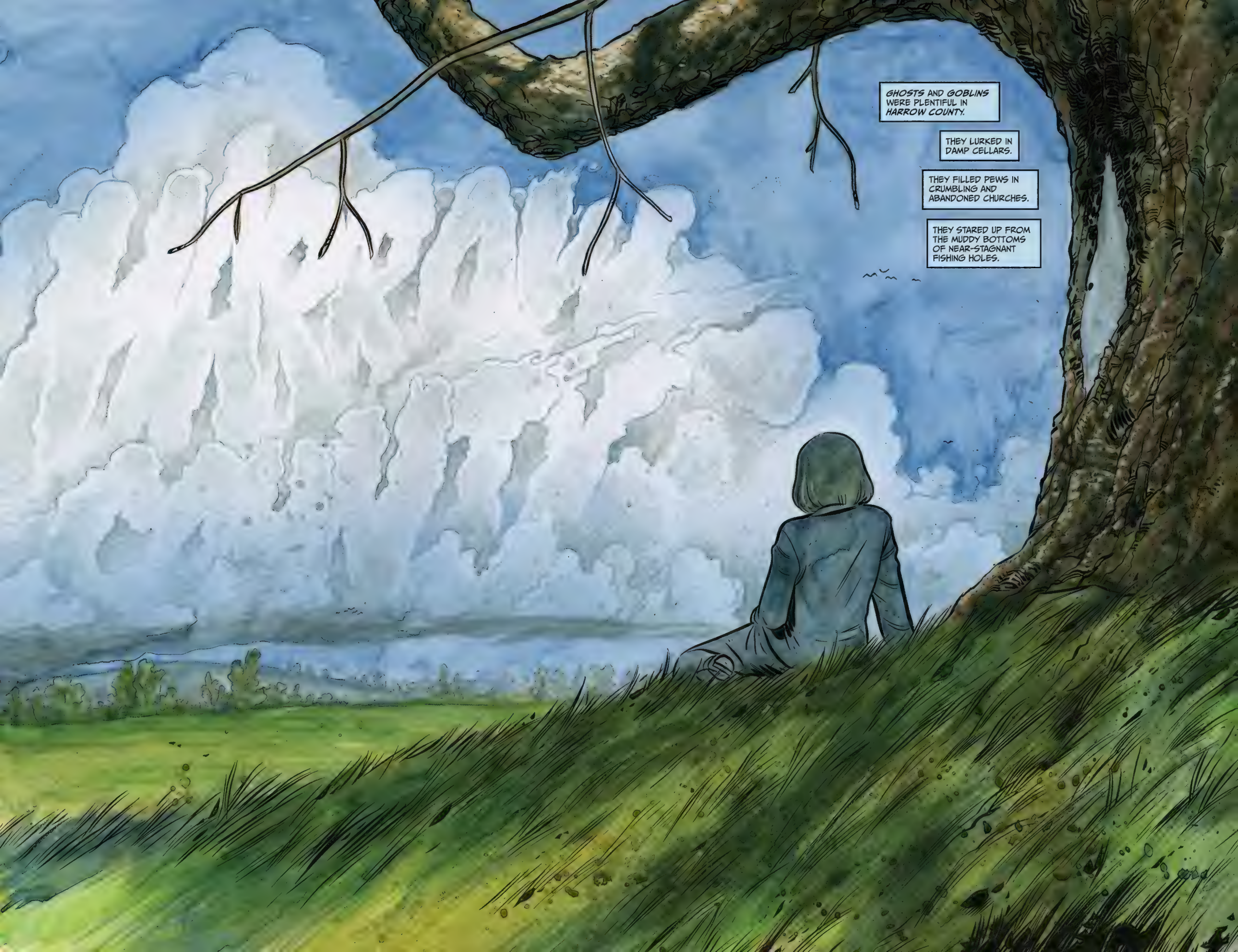
THE
CITY...

...THE
WORLD...

...ALL
OF IT.





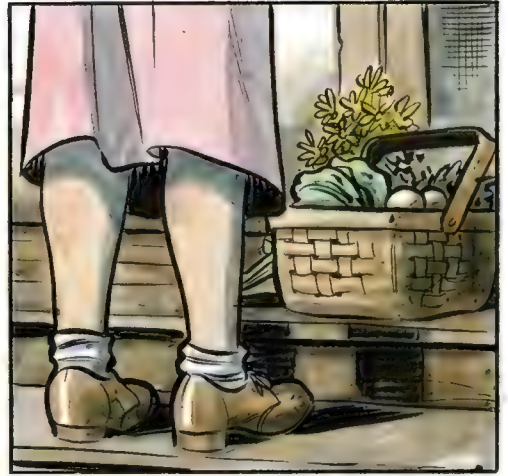
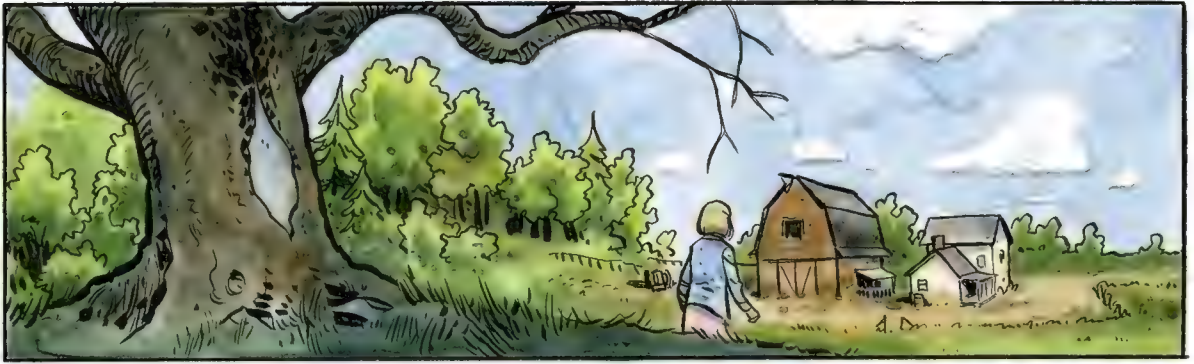
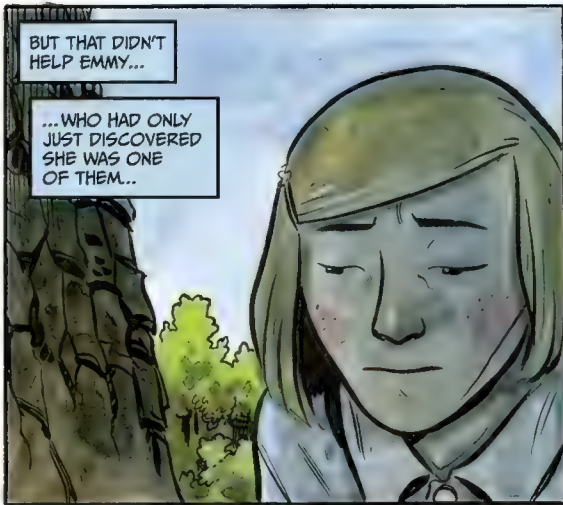


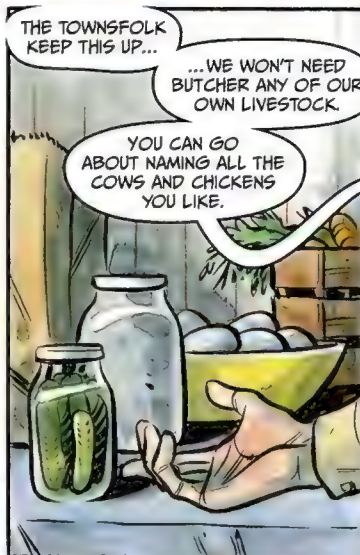
GHOSTS AND GOBLINS
WERE PLENTIFUL IN
HARROW COUNTY.

THEY LURKED IN
DAMP CELLARS.

THEY FILLED PEWS IN
CRUMBLING AND
ABANDONED CHURCHES.

THEY STARED UP FROM
THE MUDDY BOTTOMS
OF NEAR-STAGNANT
FISHING HOLES.







HHHH
EMMY.
...HOME...



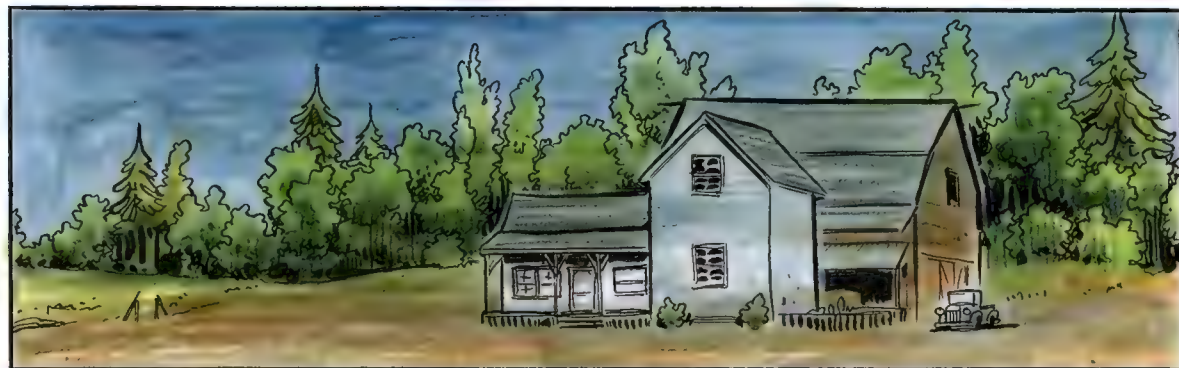
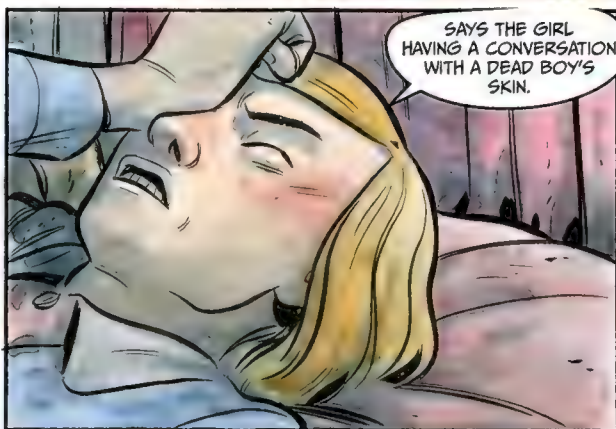
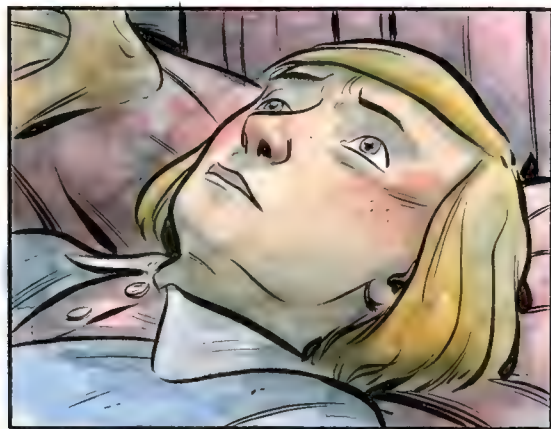
THAT'S
RIGHT.
I'M HOME.

HAVE YOU JUST
BEEN SLITHERING AROUND
THE ROOM WAITING
FOR ME?

LEAST YOU
COULD DO IS
PICK UP AFTER
YOURSELF.



...NOT SAFE..
...ALONE..
...OUT THERE...



THE PEOPLE OF HARROW COUNTY
LOOKED TO EMMY FOR GUIDANCE...

...FOR HEALING...

...AND FOR HELP IN
MATTERS BEYOND
THEIR UNDERSTANDING.



WHEN SHE
COULD, SHE
CAME TO
THEIR AID...

THERE'S
THIS THING UP
THERE...

...SOME KIND
OF SCREECHING
DEVIL.

...EVEN THOUGH
SHE DIDN'T MUCH
UNDERSTAND HER
CIRCUMSTANCES
HERSELF.



ANY GRAIN IT
TOUCHES...

...GOES
TO ROT RIGHT
QUICK.



DON'T NONE OF
US DARE GO UP THERE
ANYMORE.

JAKE
WATSON TOOK
A PEEK FOR
HIMSELF.

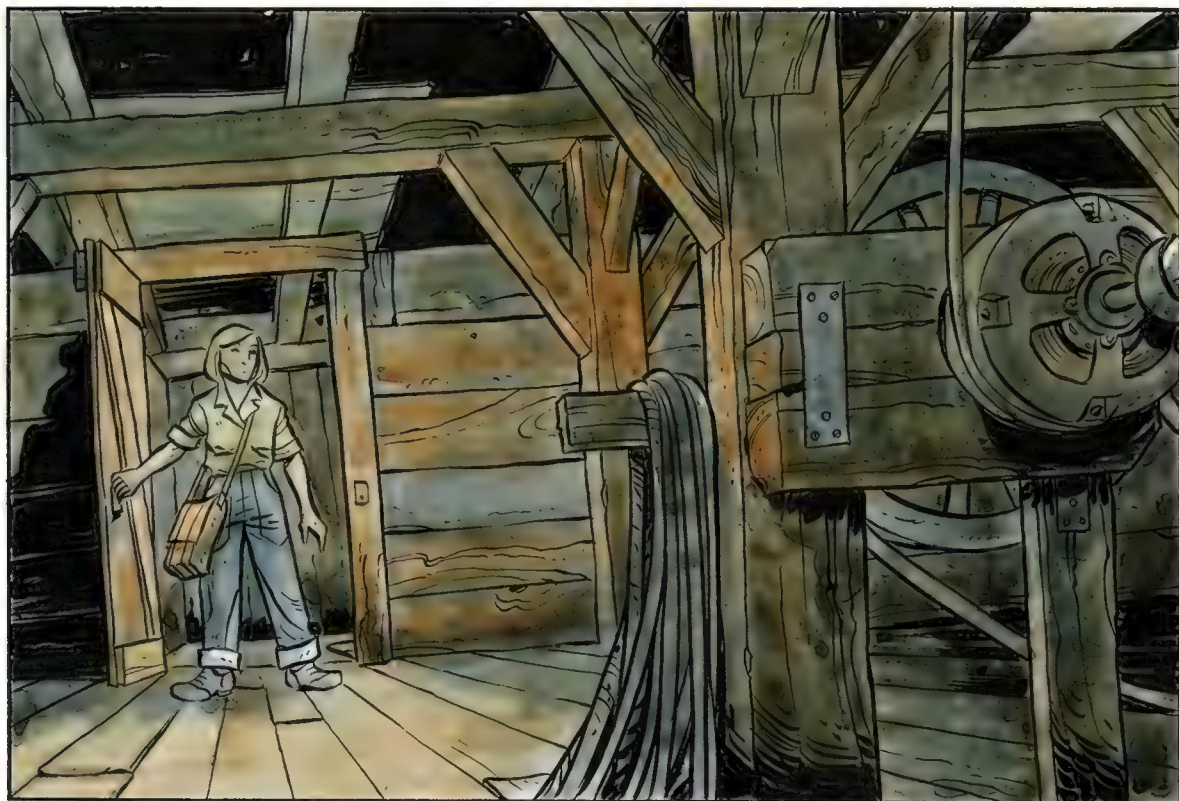
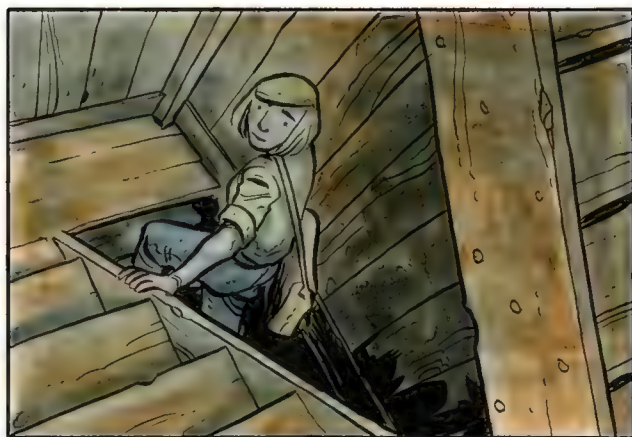
SAID THE
BEAST NEARLY
CLAWED HIS
EYES OUT.



WELL...

...LET
ME HAVE A
LOOK.







IF IT'S
HESTER BECK YOU'RE
THINKING OF...

...SHE'S
GONE.

SHE'S GONE
AND SHE'S NOT
COMING BACK.

IS
THAT
RIGHT?

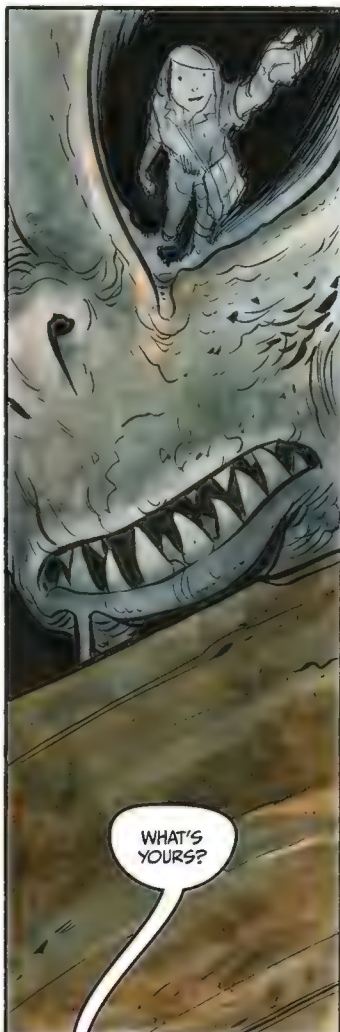
HOW
CAN YOU BE
SO SURE?



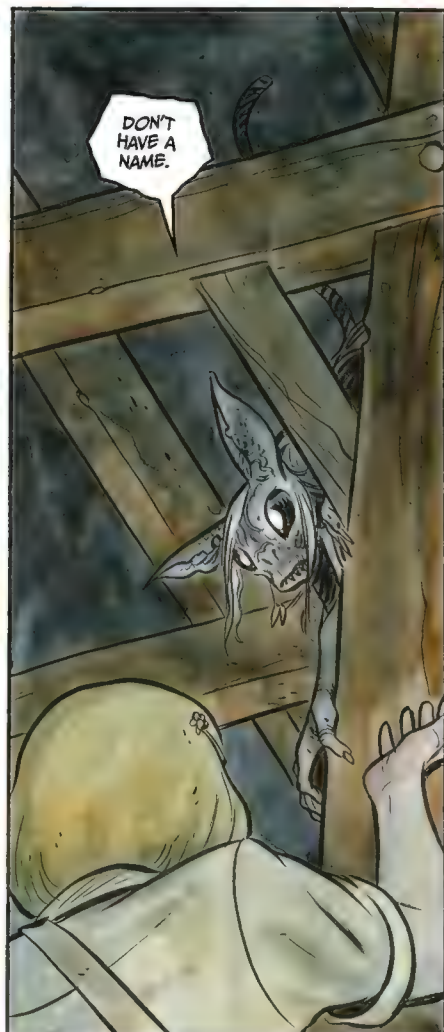
BECAUSE I
WON'T LET
HER.

YOU CAN
COME DOWN FROM
THERE IF YOU
LIKE.

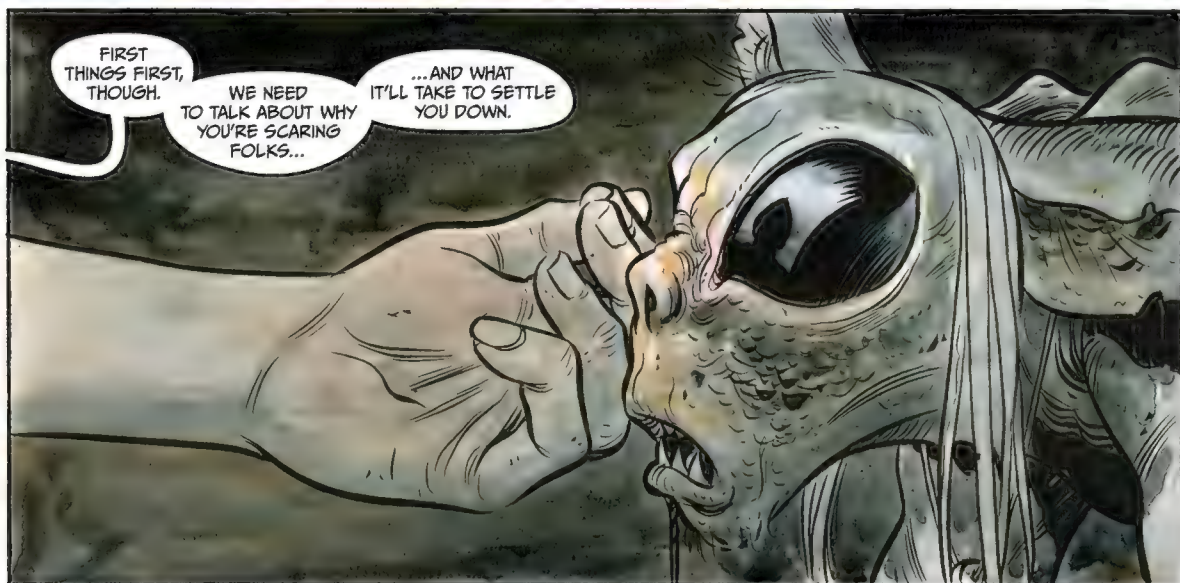
MY
NAME'S
EMMY.

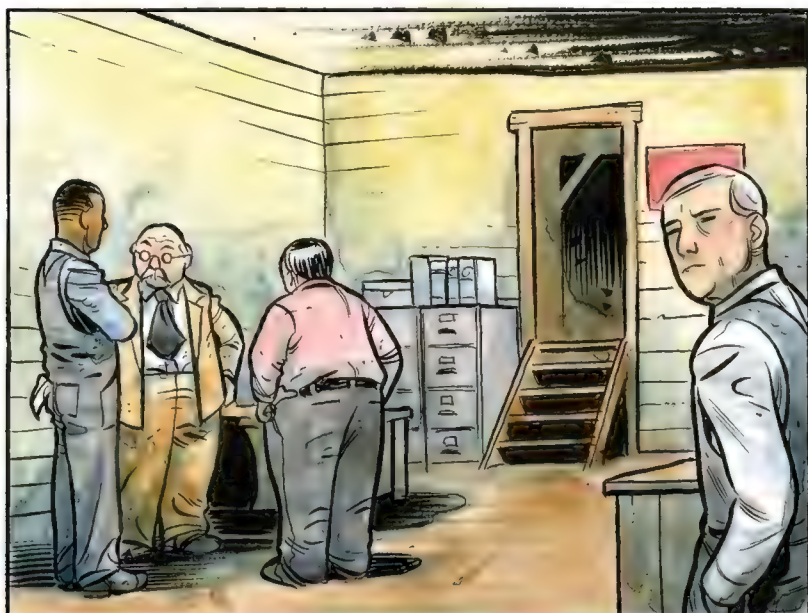


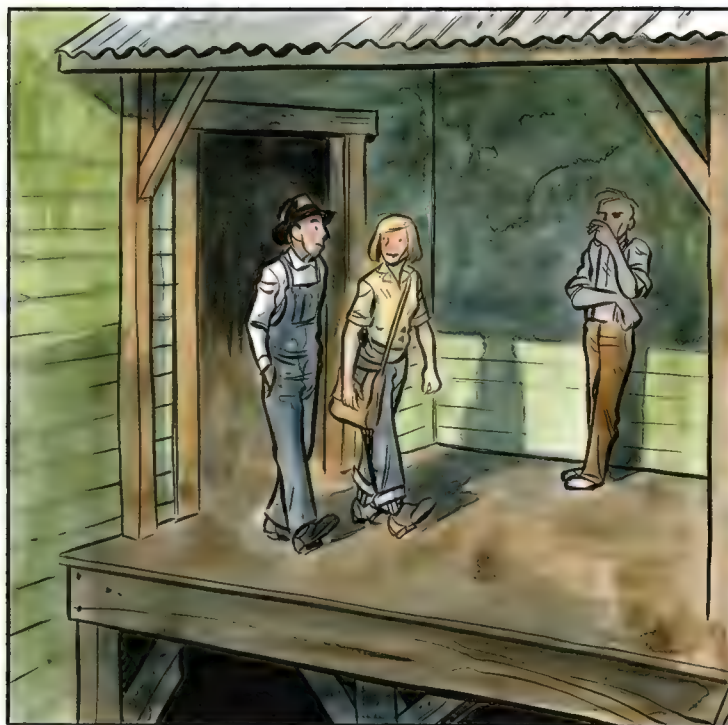
WHAT'S
YOURS?

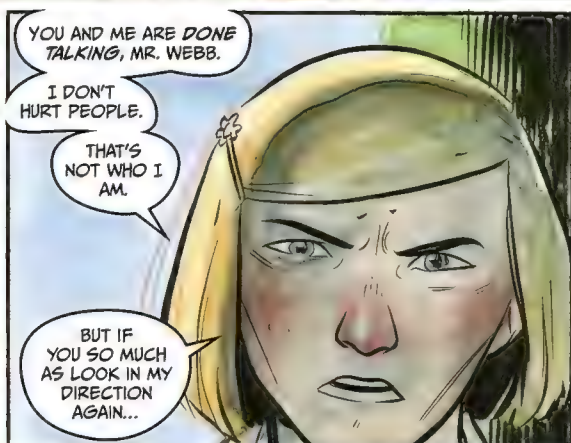


DON'T
HAVE A
NAME.





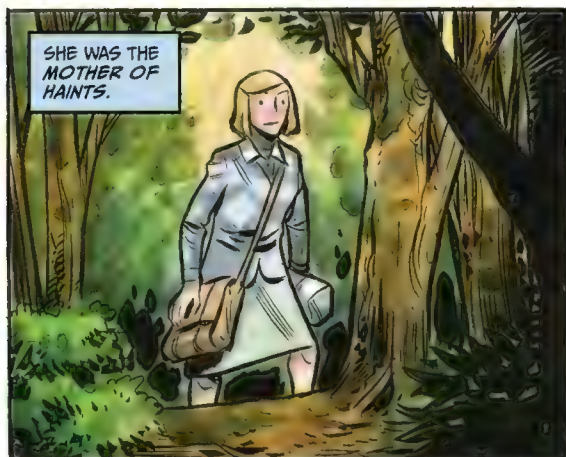




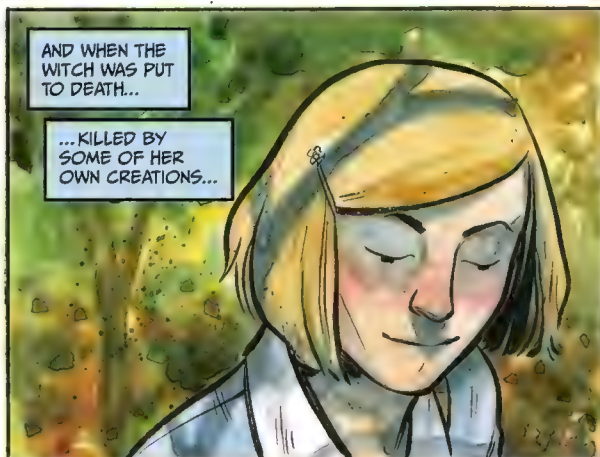


YEARS AGO, THE WITCH HESTER BECK
CALLED UP THE SPIRITS THAT HAUNTED
THE HOLLOW AND THE FORGOTTEN
PLACES.

SHE HAD BIRTHED THEM
INTO THE WORLD TO
SERVE HER PURPOSE.



SHE WAS THE
MOTHER OF
HAINTS.



AND WHEN THE
WITCH WAS PUT
TO DEATH...

...KILLED BY
SOME OF HER
OWN CREATIONS...



...THE HAINTS
WERE ORPHANED...

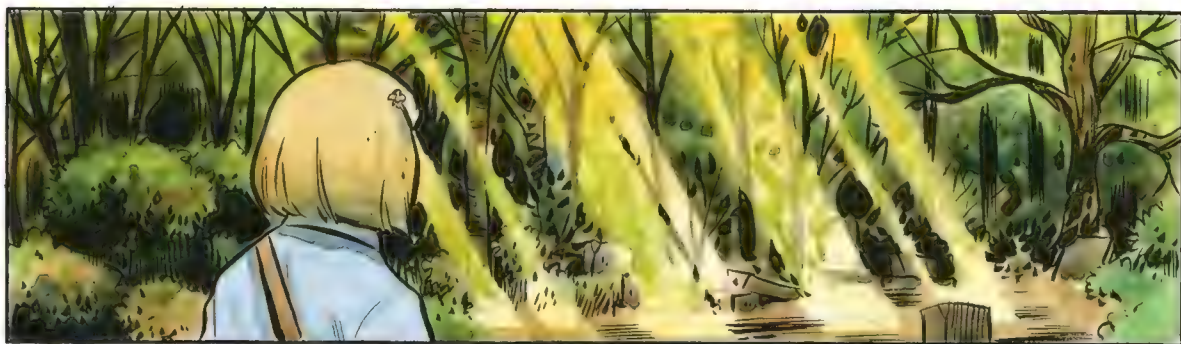
...LEFT TO THEIR
OWN DEVICES...



...UNTIL EMMY ROSE UP
TO TAKE HESTER'S PLACE.

A
MOTHER
ALREADY...

...AND I
AIN'T EVEN
MARRIED
YET.





YOU'RE
IN THERE,
AREN'T
YOU?

I CAN
HEAR YOU
SHUFFLING
ABOUT.

FIGURED YOU
MIGHT BE
HUNGRY.

I
MEAN...

...YOU PROBABLY
CATCH FOOD
ON YOUR
OWN...

...BUT MAYBE
THIS'LL BE
SOMETHING
OF A TREAT.



YE SHOULDN'TA
COME OUT HERE,
GIRL.



YE TURNED
YER BACK
ON ME.

AND NAOW YER
POWERS NO LONGER
HOLD ANY SWAY
OVER ME.

IF I WANTED,
I'D GUT YE WHERE
YE STAND.

USE YER INNARDS
LIKE BISCUITS TA
SOP UP THE BLOOD.



I
BELIEVE
YOU.

I BELIEVE
YOU MIGHT.



YOU WERE
CREATED BY HESTER
BECK...

...BUT NOW
YOU'RE SOMETHING
ELSE...

...YOUR OWN
CREATURE.



SURE
ENOUGH.

I LEARN'T TA
LIVE ALL BY
MYSELF.

LEARN'T TO
'PPRECIATE THE
SILENCE.

NAOW YE COME
TO RUIN ALL THAT.

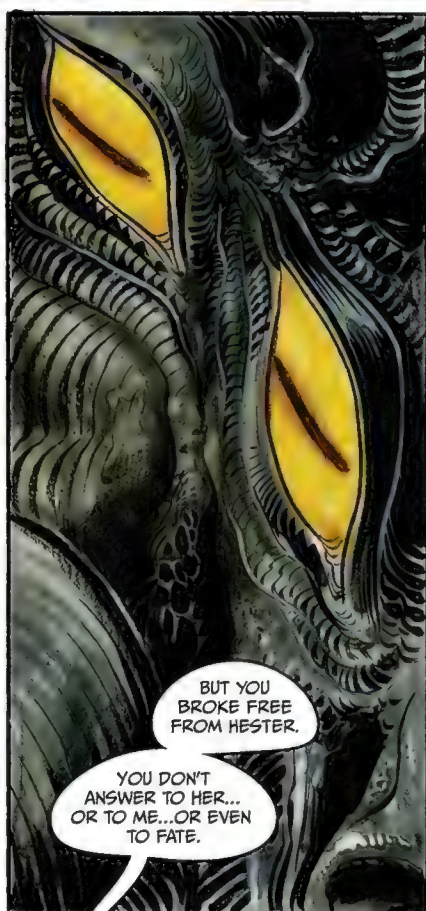
WHAT IS IT
YE WANT FROM
ME, GIRL?



I DON'T
RECKON YOU AND
ME WILL EVER BE
FRIENDS.

WHEN YOU
LOOK AT ME,
ALL YOU SEE IS THE
WOMAN WHO FORGOT
ABOUT YOU.

I WON'T
TRY TO CHANGE
YOUR OPINION
OF ME.



BUT YOU
BROKE FREE
FROM HESTER.

YOU DON'T
ANSWER TO HER...
OR TO ME...OR EVEN
TO FATE.



I GUESS
WHAT I'M
WONDERING...

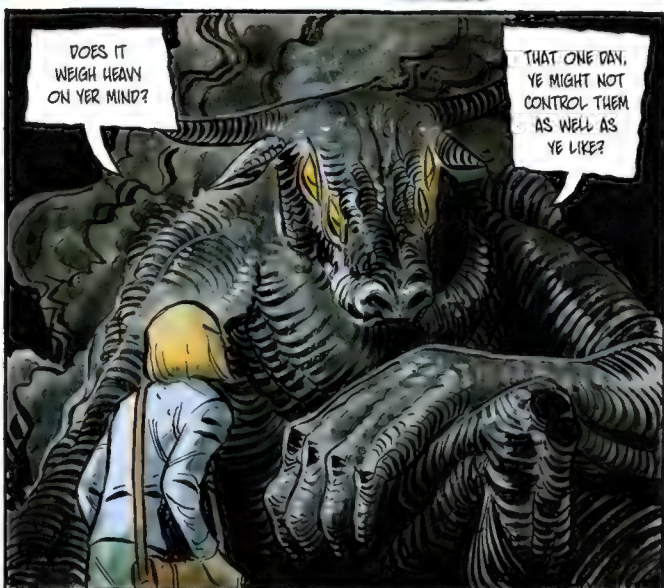
...IS IF
OTHERS...

...THE HAINTS...
THE TOWNSFOLK...

...MIGHT DO
THE SAME.



THAT
SCARE
YE?



DOES IT
WEIGH HEAVY
ON YER MIND?

THAT ONE DAY,
YE MIGHT NOT
CONTROL THEM
AS WELL AS
YE LIKE?



THAT THEY
MIGHT TURN
ON YE...
...THE WAY
YE TURN
ON THEM...

...AND WON'T
NONE OF YER
MINIONS LIFT
A FINGER TA
HELP YE?

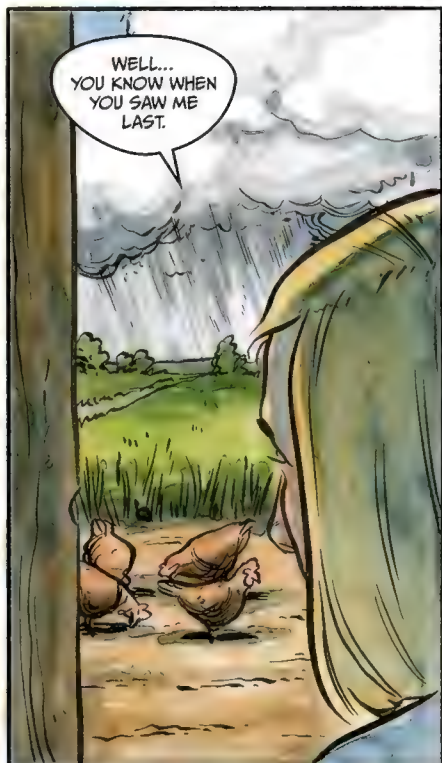


THAT'S ALREADY
HAPPENED
ONCE.

I DON'T
SEE WHY IT
WON'T HAPPEN
AGAIN.

BUT I
WASN'T ASKING
JUST FOR
THEM.

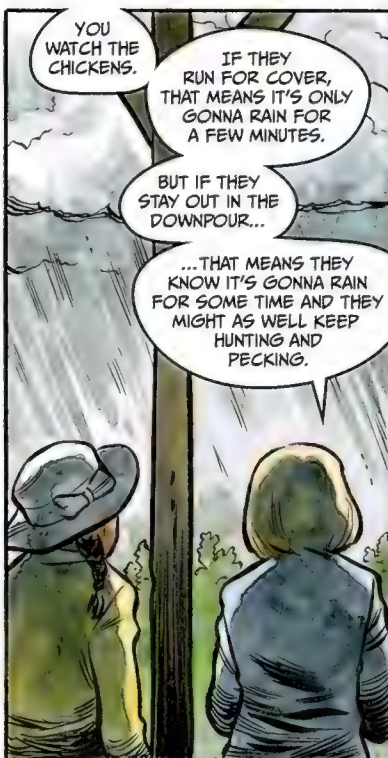
I WAS
ASKING FOR
MYSELF.







YOU KNOW HOW YOU CAN
TELL IF IT'S GONNA RAIN FOR
A SHORT SPELL OR A
LONG ONE?



YOU
WATCH THE
CHICKENS.

IF THEY
RUN FOR COVER,
THAT MEANS IT'S ONLY
GONNA RAIN FOR
A FEW MINUTES.

BUT IF THEY
STAY OUT IN THE
DOWNPOUR...

...THAT MEANS THEY
KNOW IT'S GONNA RAIN
FOR SOME TIME AND THEY
MIGHT AS WELL KEEP
HUNTING AND
PECKING.



I RECKON I'M
JUST ANOTHER ONE
OF HESTER'S CREATIONS,
TOO.

I DON'T
KNOW WHAT THAT
MAKES ME.

JUST LIKE
I DON'T KNOW WHAT
IT MAKES YOU...

...EXCEPT
THAT YOU'RE MY
FRIEND...



...IF YOU
STILL WANT
TO BE...



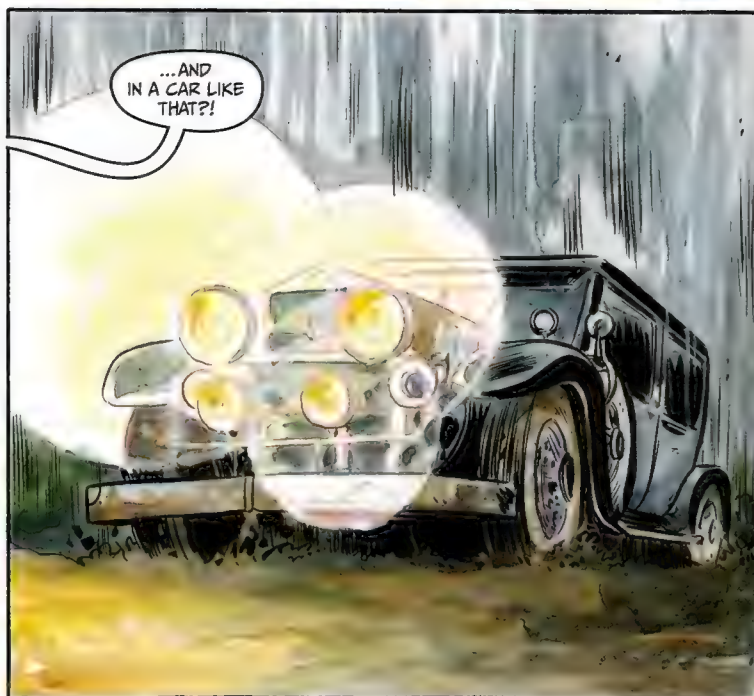
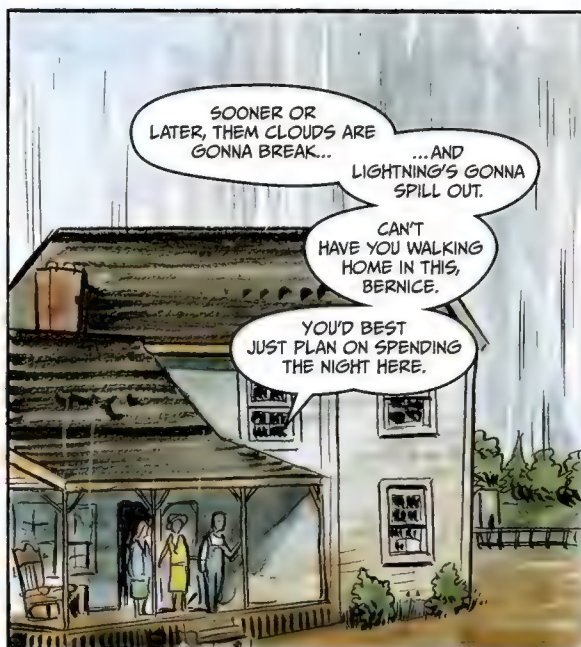
...AND I THINK IT MIGHT BE
A WHILE BEFORE WE SEE
OUR WAY THROUGH TO
THE OTHER SIDE OF
THIS STORM...

...SO WE
MIGHT AS WELL STICK
OUR HEADS OUT AND SEE
WHAT HAPPENS...

...TOGETHER.



I THOUGHT
I HEARD RAIN.



EMMY STOOD THERE...
LOOKING OUT ACROSS THE RAIN...
AND SHE MIGHT AS WELL HAVE
BEEN STARING INTO A MIRROR.

THE GIRL WAS HER
SPITTING IMAGE...

...ALTHOUGH DRESSED MORE
FANCILY AND CARRYING HERSELF
WITH A KIND OF POISE EMMY HAD
NEVER KNOWN.

AND AS THE NEWCOMER
SPOKE, EMMY REALIZED...

WELL,
HELLO THERE...

...SISTER.

...THAT SHE WASN'T
AS ALONE AS SHE
THOUGHT SHE WAS.



MTC
15

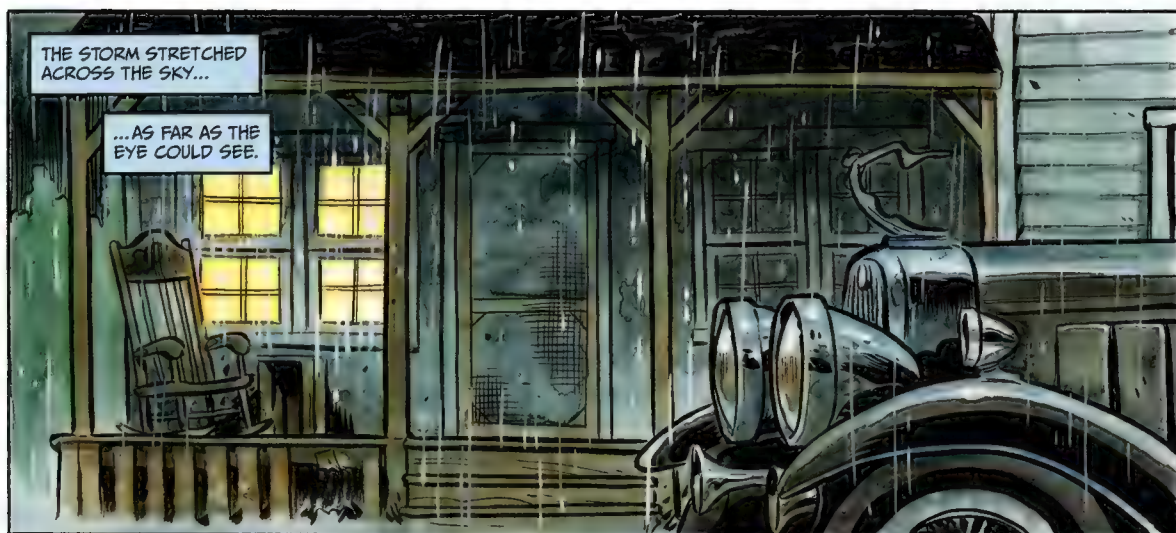


SIX

LIGHTNING
FLASHED...

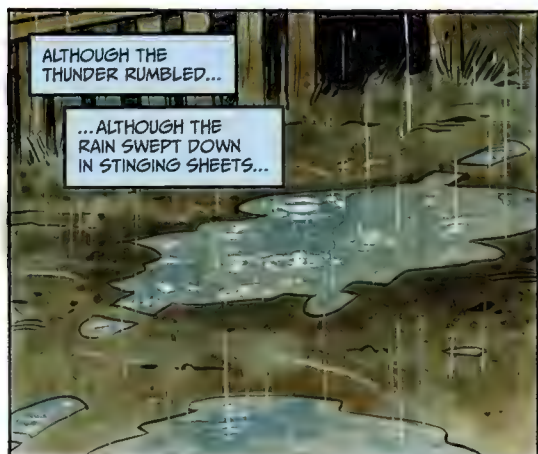
...AS BRIGHT
AND COLD AS
WITCH'S FIRE.





THE STORM STRETCHED
ACROSS THE SKY...

...AS FAR AS THE
EYE COULD SEE.



ALTHOUGH THE
THUNDER RUMBLED...

...ALTHOUGH THE
RAIN SWEEPED DOWN
IN STINGING SHEETS...

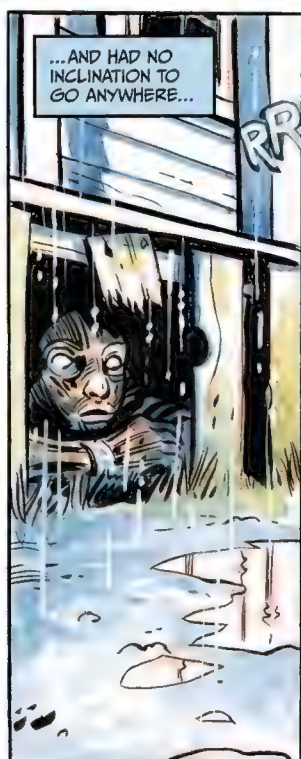


...THE CLOUDS
WERE STILL...

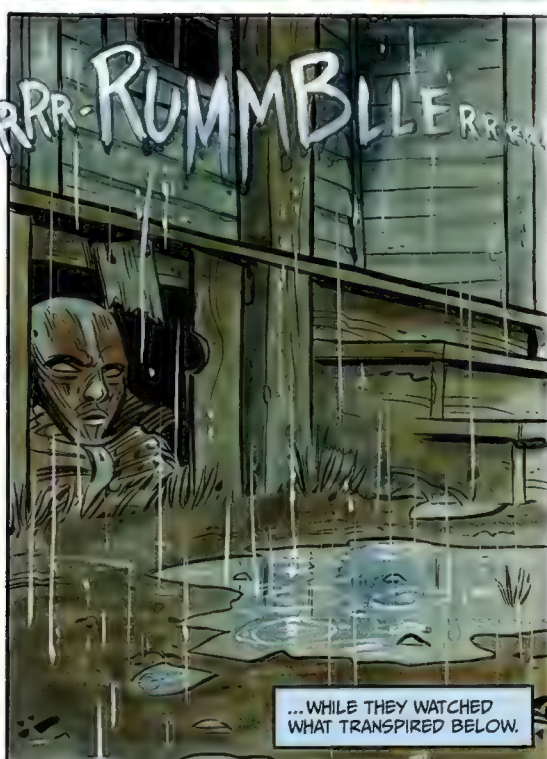
...UNMOVING...



...AS IF THEY
HAD STOPPED...



...AND HAD NO
INCLINATION TO
GO ANYWHERE...

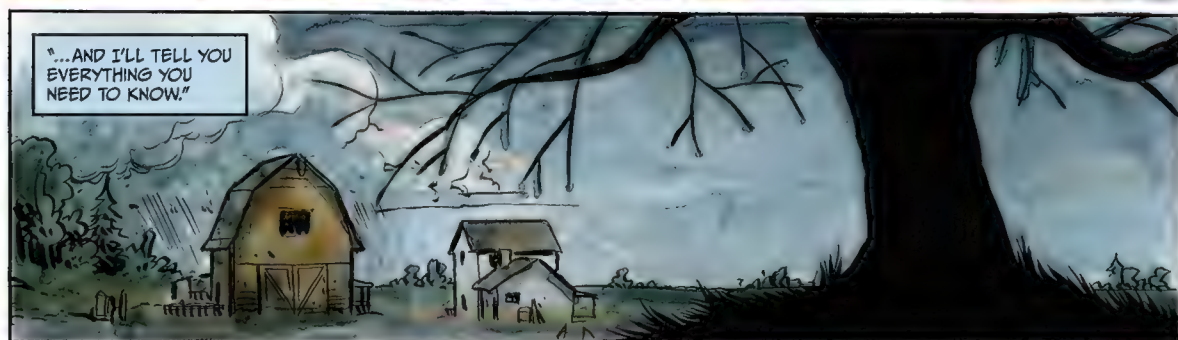


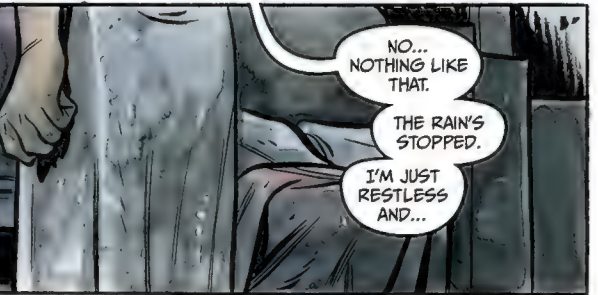
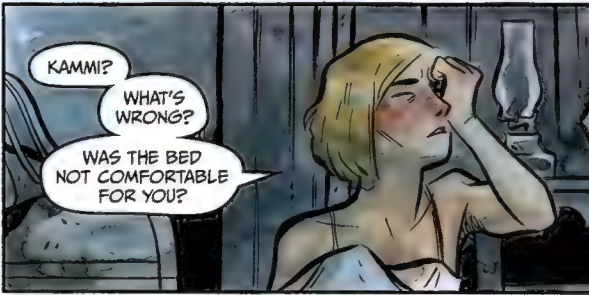
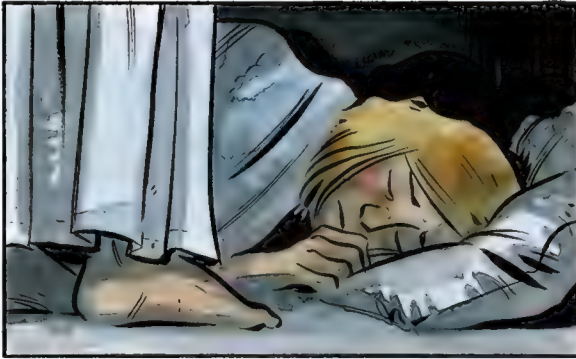
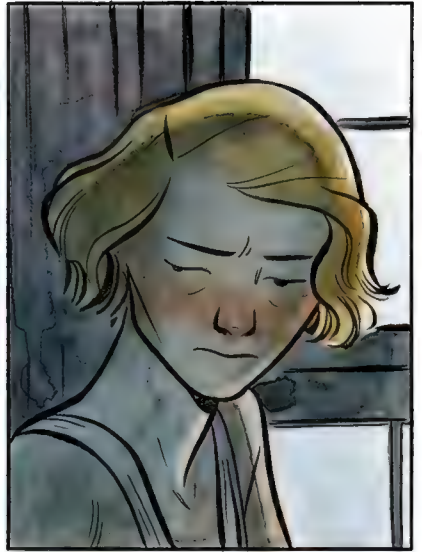
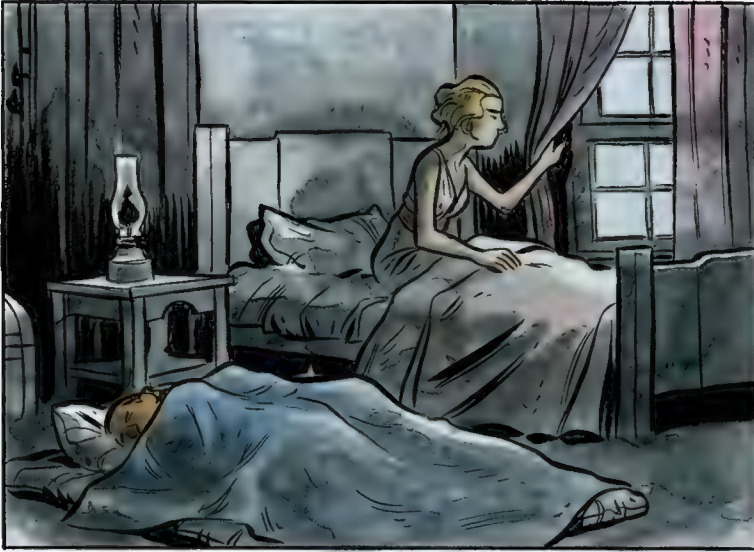
...WHILE THEY WATCHED
WHAT TRANSPIRED BELOW.











"THIS IS SOMETHING
FOR JUST YOU AND ME."



SO THIS
IS WHERE IT
HAPPENED?



THIS IS
WHERE THEY KILLED
HESTER BECK.



THIS IS
WHERE THEY KILLED
OUR MOTHER.



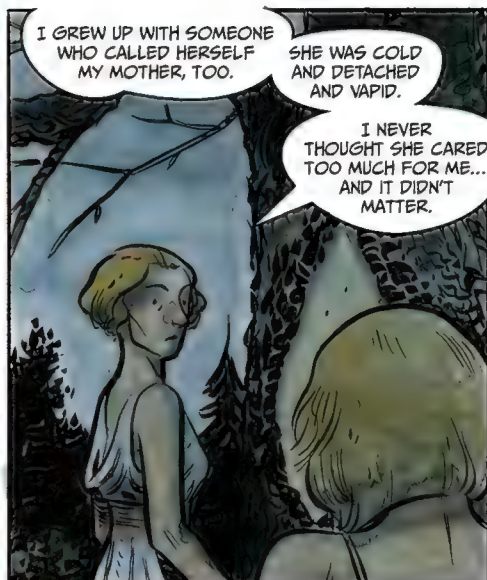


THE WITCH WASN'T MY MOTHER.

MY MOTHER DIED WHEN I WAS A LITTLE GIRL.

I BARELY REMEMBER HER.

BUT I KNOW SHE LOVED ME... AND I LOVED HER.



I GREW UP WITH SOMEONE WHO CALLED HERSELF MY MOTHER, TOO.

SHE WAS COLD AND DETACHED AND VAPID.

I NEVER THOUGHT SHE CARED TOO MUCH FOR ME... AND IT DIDN'T MATTER.



IT WAS ONLY RECENTLY THAT I LEARNED THAT MY REAL MOTHER...

...OUR REAL MOTHER...

...WAS MURDERED HERE... IN THIS PLACE.



WE WEREN'T BORN...

...NOT LIKE NORMAL BABIES...

...YOU KNOW THAT MUCH, RIGHT?



HESTER CREATED US, THOUGH, DIDN'T SHE?

AND ISN'T THAT WHAT A MOTHER DOES?

SHE CREATED US ON THE DAY SHE DIED...



...AND WE WERE BORN FROM THE VERY TREE WHERE THEY BURIED HER.



SHE'S
RIGHT HERE!

RIGHT UNDER
OUR FEET!

AND I
BET THEY DIDN'T
BURY HER TOO
DEEP!

I BET WE
COULD DIG HER
UP WITHOUT HARDLY
TRYING!



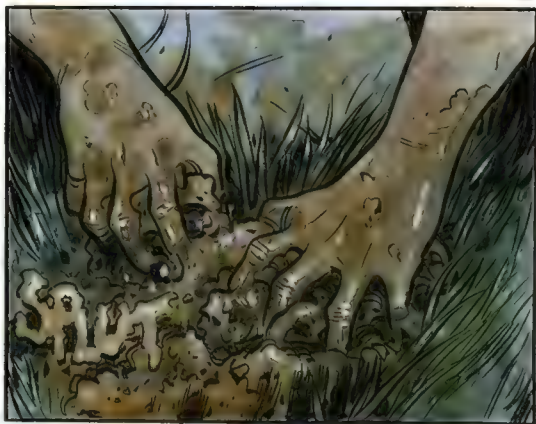
KAMMI...
WHAT ARE YOU
DOING?

STOP
THAT.



DON'T
YOU WANT TO
SEE IF IT'S
TRUE?

DON'T YOU
WANT TO KNOW
IF SHE EVEN
EXISTED?



WHAT IF
WE DIG AND
DIG AND
DIG...

...BUT
NEVER FIND
HER?

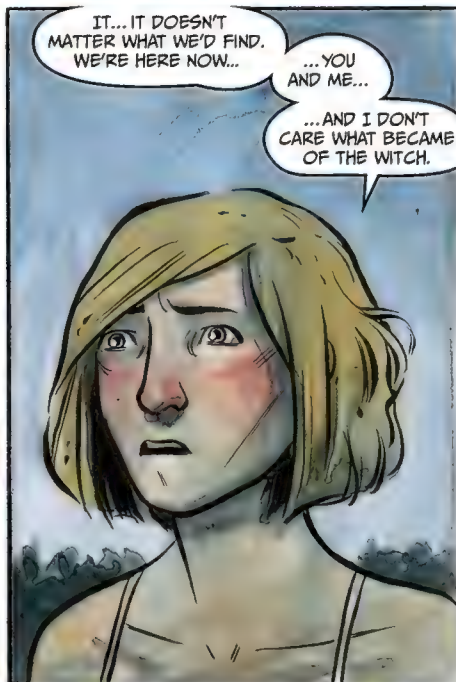
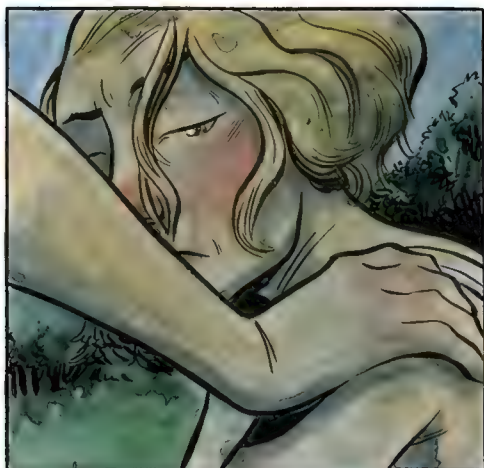
WOULD THAT
MEAN SHE WAS
NEVER HERE
AT ALL?

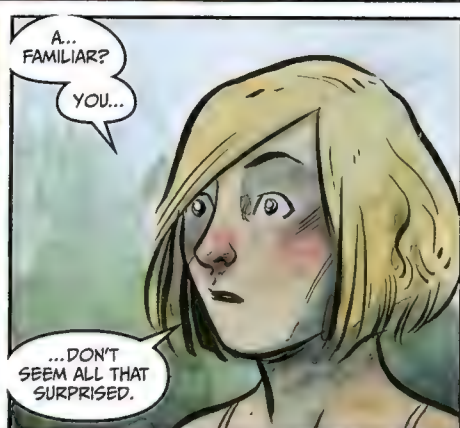
OR DID SHE
MAYBE CRAWL OUT
OF THE DIRT ON
HER OWN A LONG
TIME AGO?

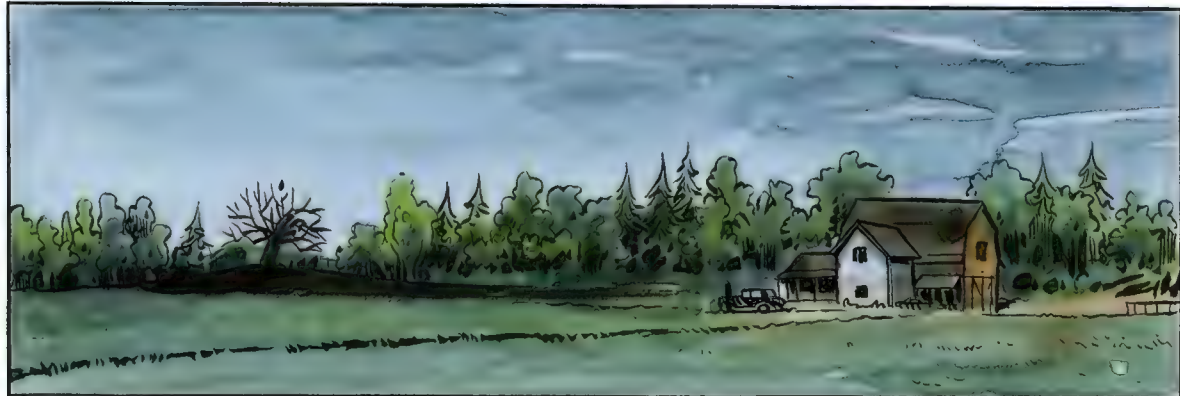


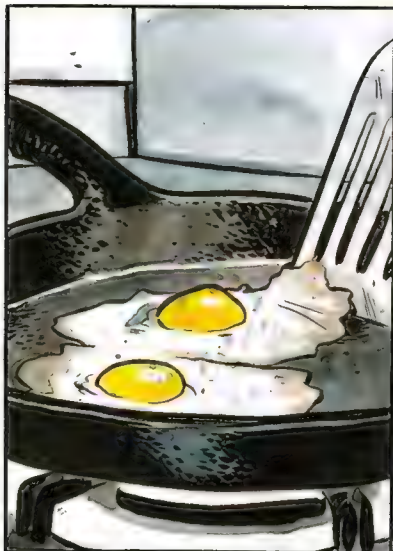
I...

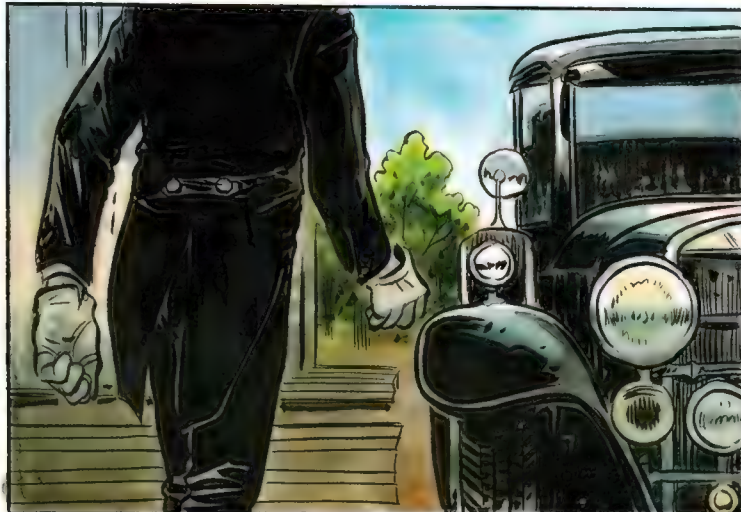
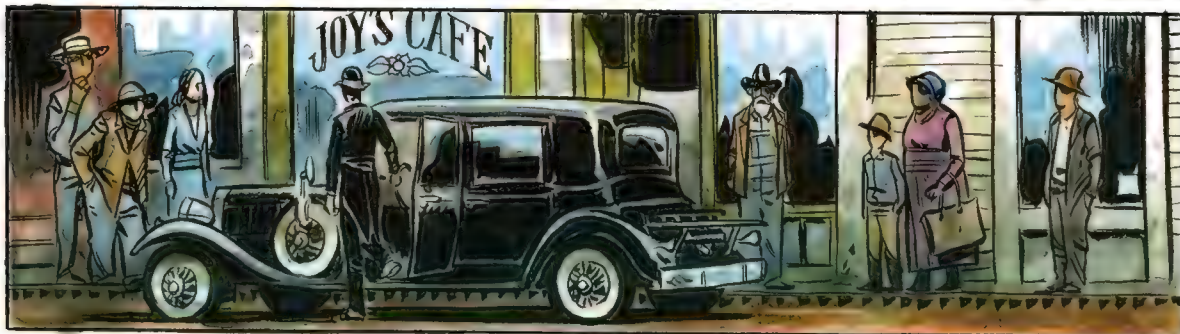
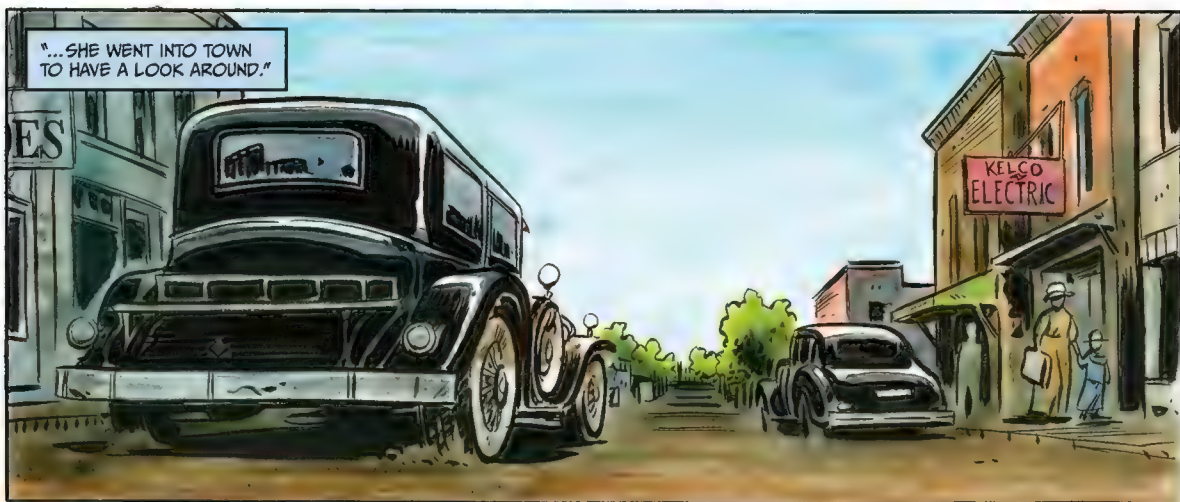
I DON'T
WANT TO
KNOW.

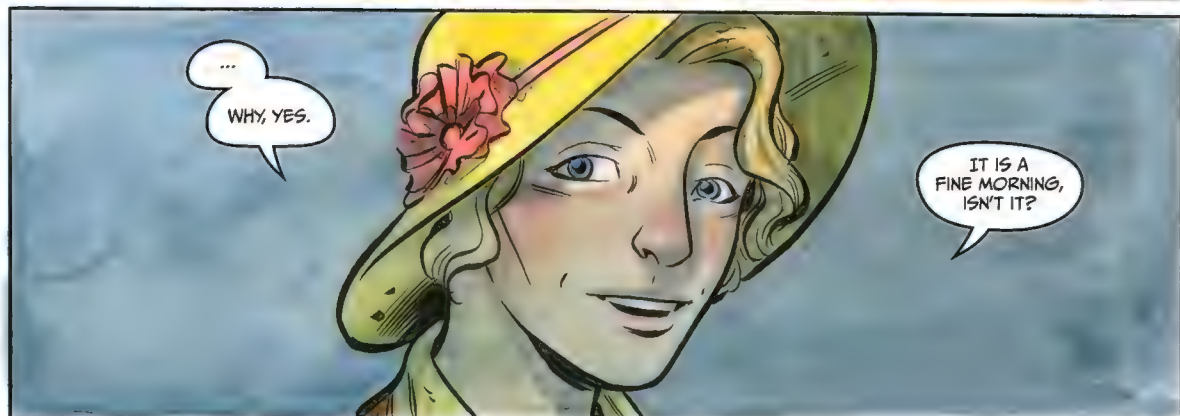


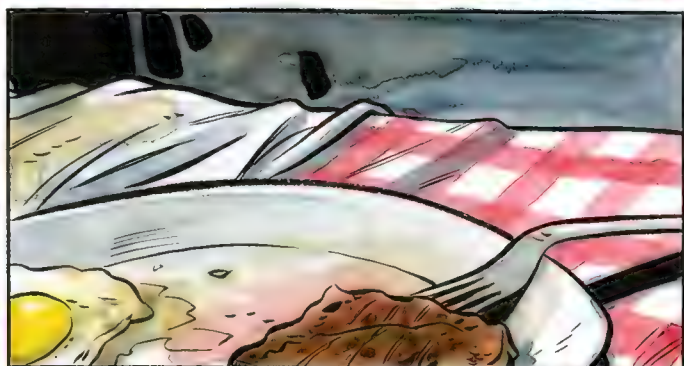


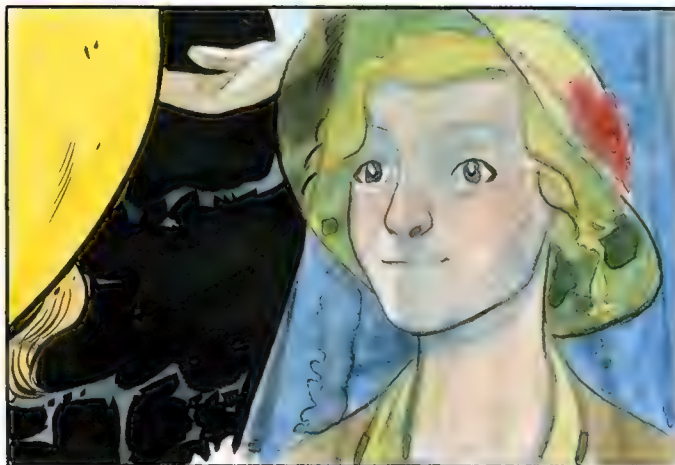


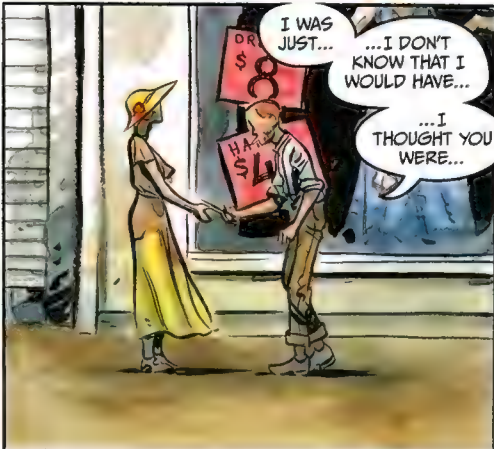


















...ALL BECAUSE OF A JEALOUS MAN'S FEAR...

...AND A YOUNG GIRL'S WHIM.

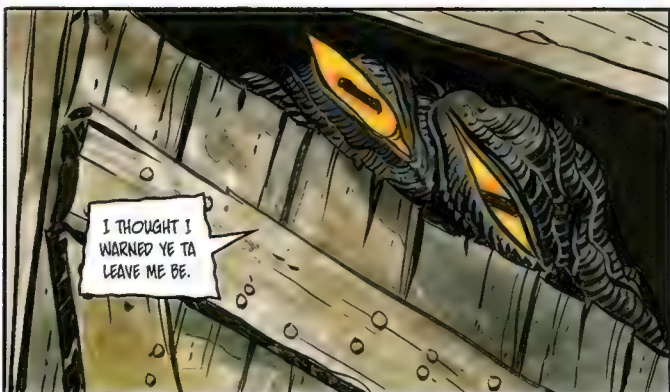


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SEVEN



ISN'T IT
JUST A FINE
AFTERNOON?





SEE?

I TOLD
YOU HE WOULD
BE HERE.

THIS SPOT
WILL DO
NICELY.



DIDN'T YE
HEAR WHAT
I SAID?

I DON'T
WANT YE
HERE.



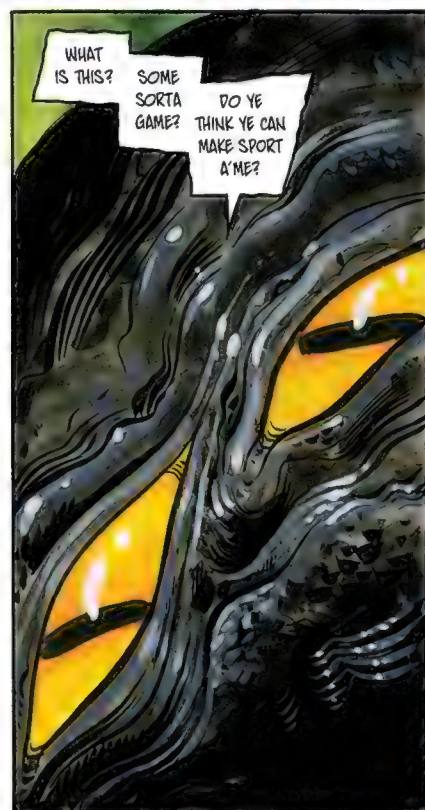
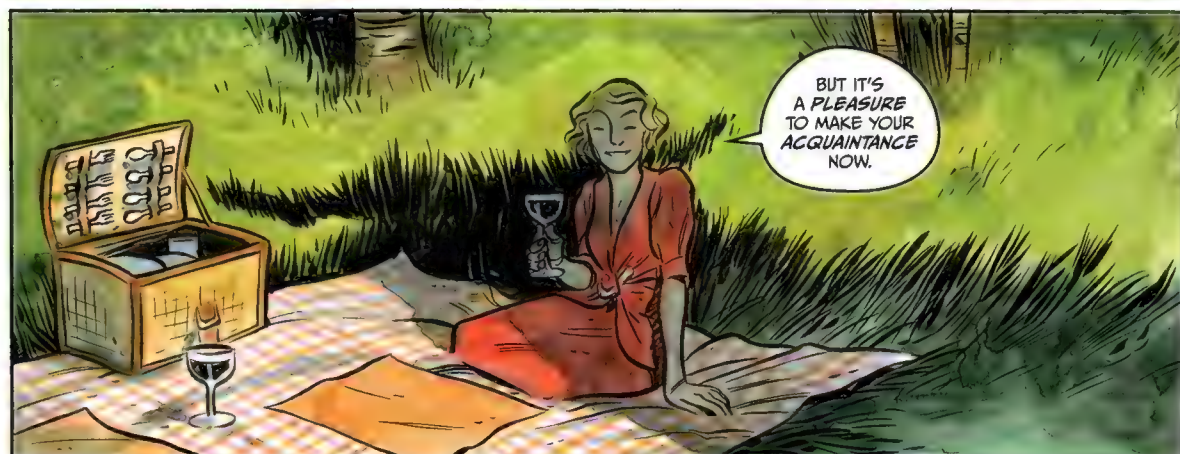
WHAT DO
YE THINK YER
DOIN'?



WHAT DOES
IT LOOK LIKE,
SILLY?



AND YOU'RE
WELCOME TO
JOIN ME IF
YOU LIKE.







YE AIN'T
THE SAME
GIRL THAT
I MET.

THAT GIRL
WOULDN'T BE
SO BOLD AS
TO TEMPT ME.



YOU
MET MY
SISTER.

MY TWIN
SISTER.

WE WERE
BORN ON THE
SAME DAY, BUT
I WAS SWEEPED
AWAY...

...TAKEN
FAR FROM
HERE.



YE LEFT
ME TOO.

I WAS
A BABY!



I KNOW
WHUT YE
WERE...

...WHUT
YE ARE...

...AND EVEN
AS A BABE,
YE COULD
HAF STOPPED
IT.



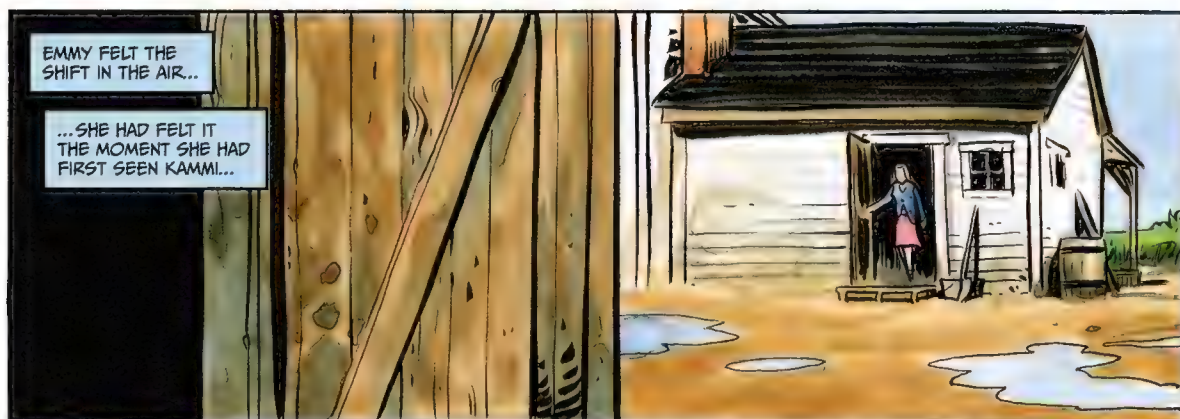
MAYBE I
COULD HAVE...

...JUST AS YOU
MIGHT HAVE BEEN
ABLE TO SNATCH ME
AWAY AND RAISE ME
YOURSELF...

...IF IT
WAS ALL THAT
IMPORTANT TO
YOU.

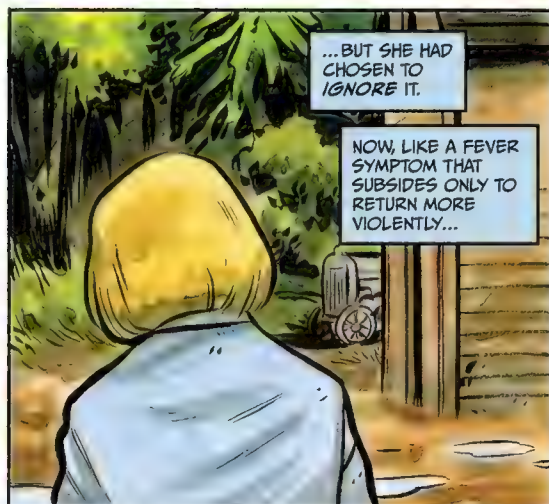
BUT
HERE WE ARE
NOW.

SO WHY
DON'T WE MAKE
OUR APOLOGIES AND
TRY TO BE BETTER
FRIENDS GOING
FORWARD?



EMMY FELT THE
SHIFT IN THE AIR...

... SHE HAD FELT IT
THE MOMENT SHE HAD
FIRST SEEN KAMMI...



...BUT SHE HAD
CHOSEN TO
IGNORE IT.

NOW, LIKE A FEVER
SYMPTOM THAT
SUBSIDES ONLY TO
RETURN MORE
VIOLENTLY...



...THE FEELING OF
DREAD HAD RETURNED.



PA?
DO
YOU NEED
ANY HELP?



YOU OUGHT
NOT HAVE TO
ASK...

...IF YOU
NEED HELP...

...BUT
I WASN'T
SURE IF--

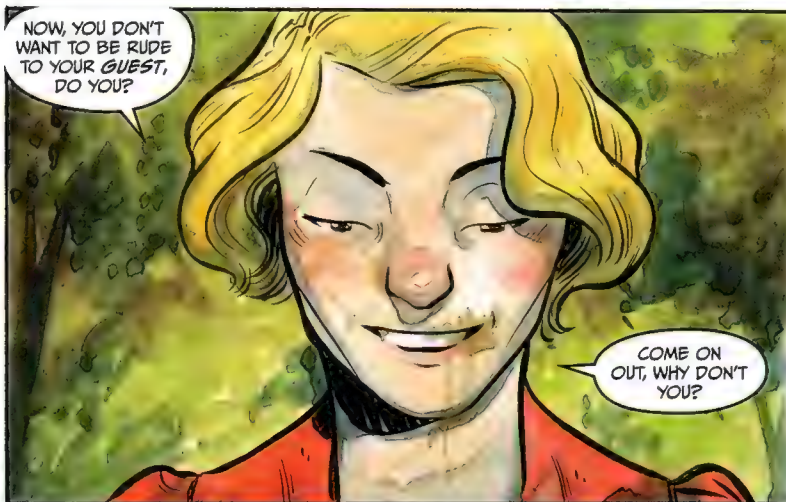
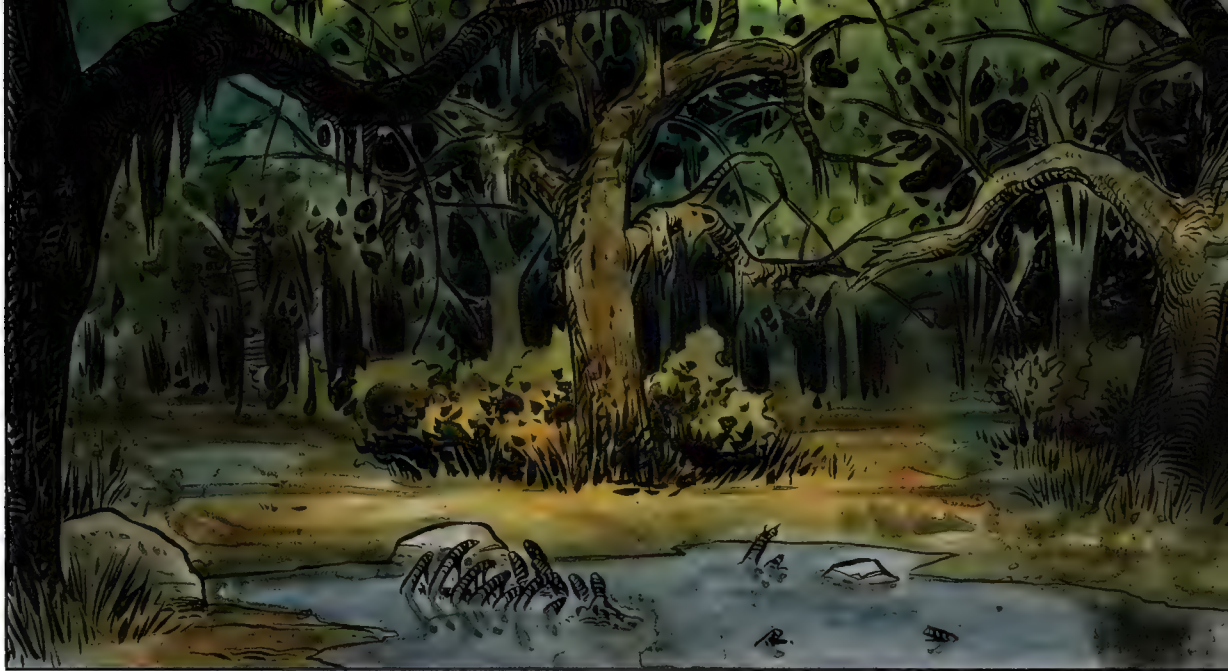


OF COURSE
I COULD USE
A HAND.

THERE'S MORE
TO BE DONE THAN
ANY TEN PEOPLE
COULD DO ON
THEIR OWN.

I JUST
FIGURED YOU
MIGHT BE TOO
BUSY.



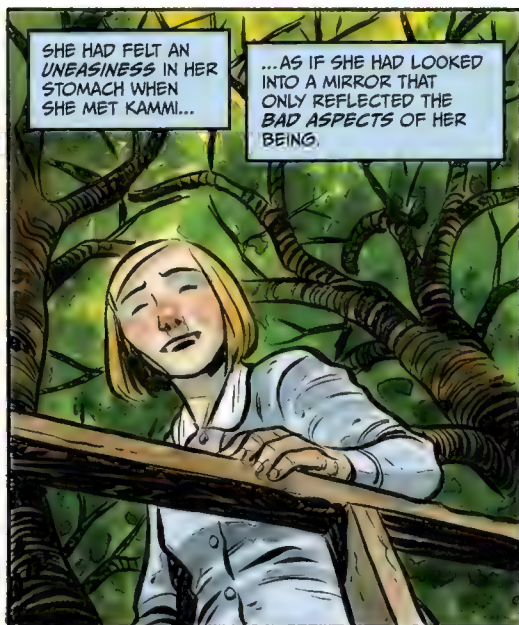






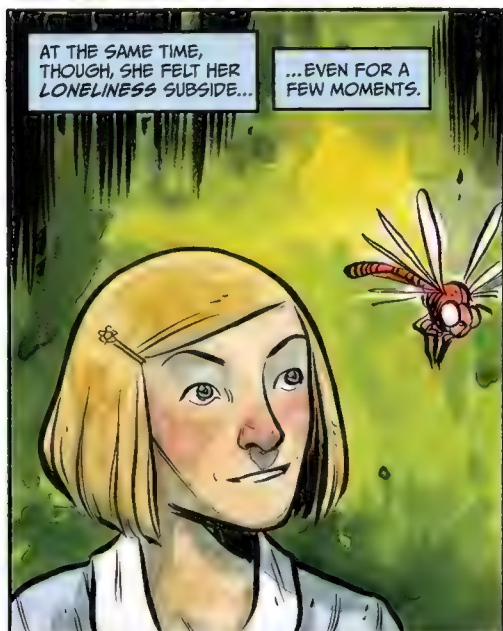
EMMY ASKED
HERSELF...

...WHY HAD SHE
DISREGARDED
THE WARNINGS?



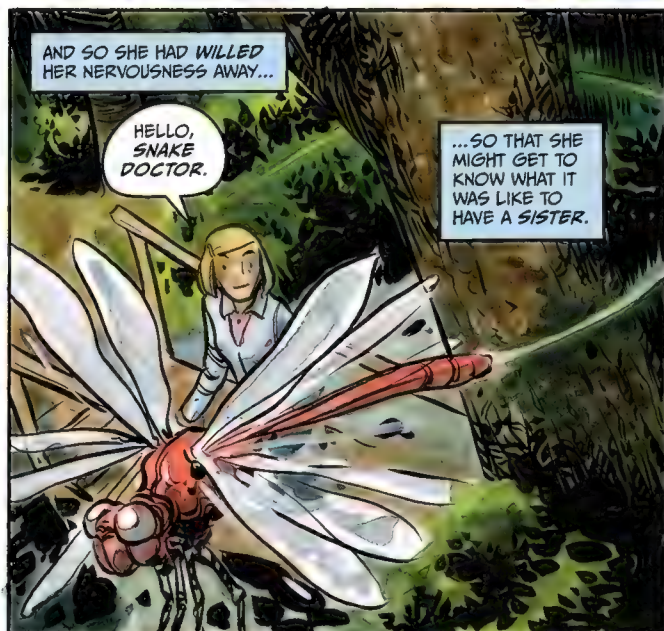
SHE HAD FELT AN
UNEASINESS IN HER
STOMACH WHEN
SHE MET KAMMI...

...AS IF SHE HAD LOOKED
INTO A MIRROR THAT
ONLY REFLECTED THE
BAD ASPECTS OF HER
BEING.



AT THE SAME TIME,
THOUGH, SHE FELT HER
LONELINESS SUBSIDE...

...EVEN FOR A
FEW MOMENTS.



AND SO SHE HAD **WILLED**
HER NERVOUSNESS AWAY...

HELLO,
SNAKE
DOCTOR.

...SO THAT SHE
MIGHT GET TO
KNOW WHAT IT
WAS LIKE TO
HAVE A **SISTER**.



ARE YOU
TENDING ONE OF
YOUR PATIENTS?

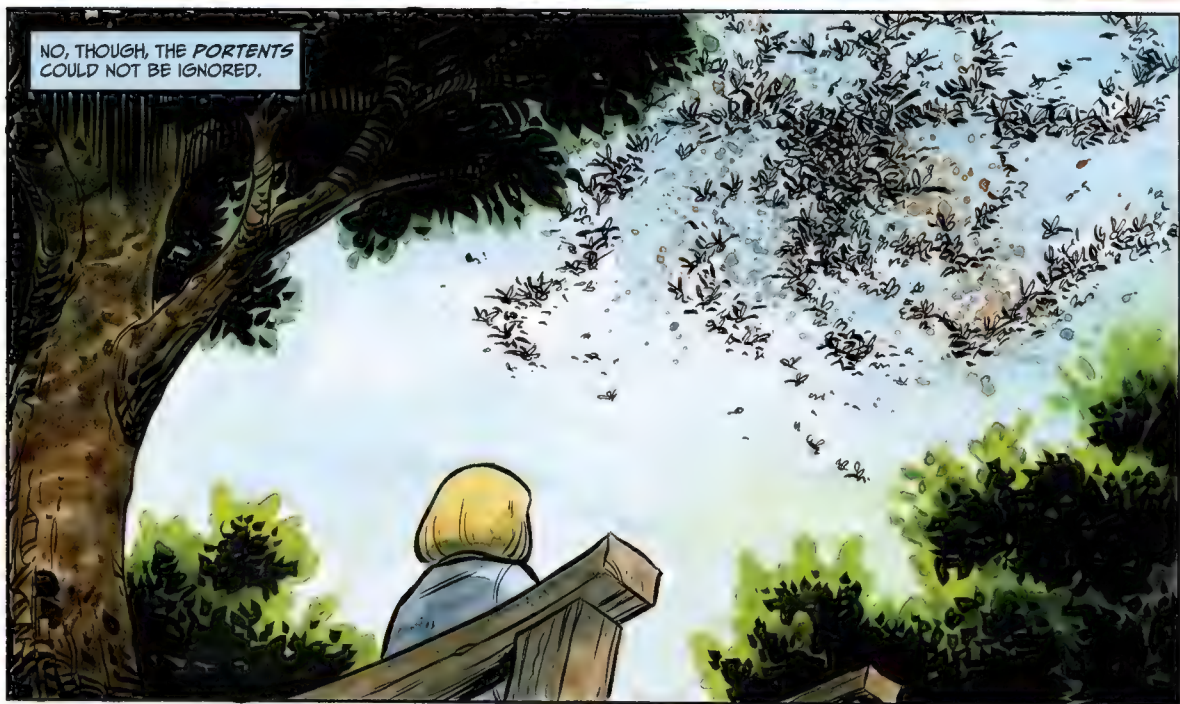
ARE
THERE MANY
SNAKES NEAR--



OH.

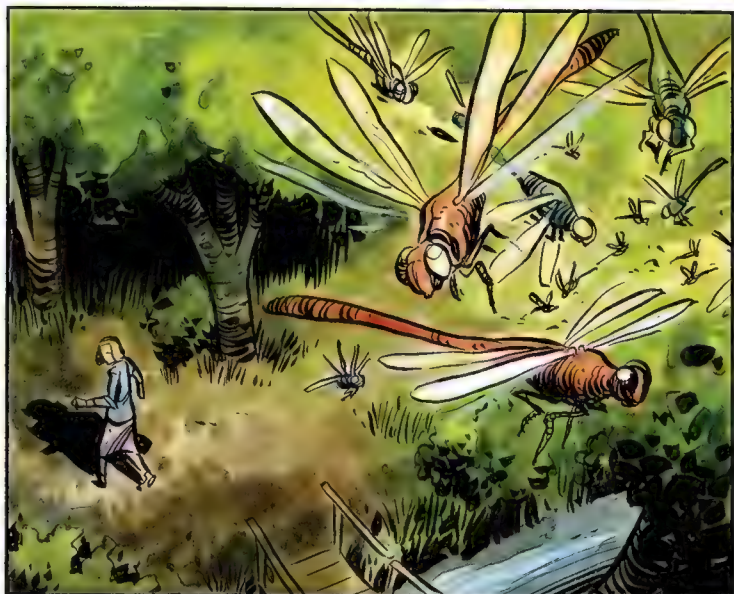


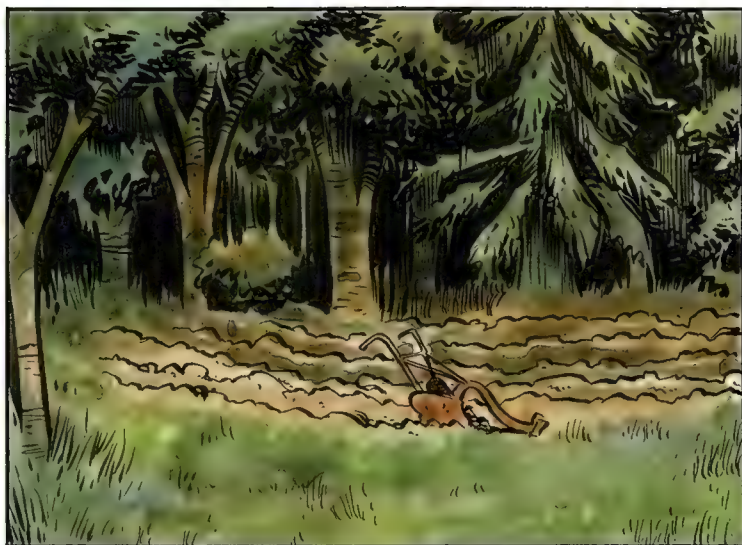
NO, THOUGH, THE *PORTENTS*
COULD NOT BE IGNORED.



A *SERPENT* HAD SLITHERED
INTO HARROW COUNTY...

...A POISONOUS CREATURE
TAINING EVERYTHING IT
TOUCHED.





ARE
YOU OUT
THERE?



ARE YOU
WATCHING?



ALL OF
THEM...

...SO
TIMID.



THERE
YOU ARE.

THANK YOU
FOR NOT KEEPING
ME WAITING.

I HAVE
SO MANY OF
YOU TO VISIT.



YOU HAVE
TAKEN THE
SHAPE OF
MAN...



...SO,
PLEASE, STAND
LIKE MEN.



YOU
PLOW THESE
FIELDS...

...SO YOU
CAN KNOW WHAT IT
IS LIKE TO DO THE
WORK OF MAN.

NOW...
I WANT YOU
TO COME WITH
ME...



...AND HELP
ME TEND
TO MAN'S OTHER
BUSINESS.



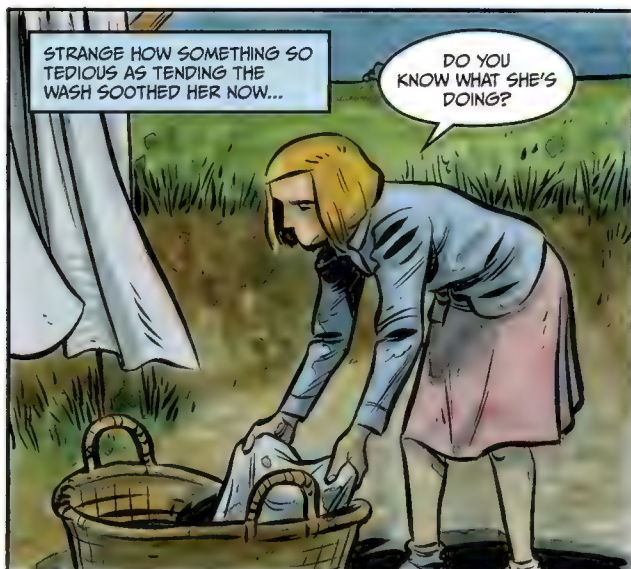
WITH EVERYTHING
CHANGING AROUND
HER...

...WITH ALL THESE NEW
WORRIES AND CONCERNS
TAKING SHAPE...



... EMMY THOUGHT TO LOSE
HERSELF...EVEN FOR A TIME...

...IN THE OLD.



STRANGE HOW SOMETHING SO
TEDIOUS AS TENDING THE
WASH SOOTHED HER NOW...

DO YOU
KNOW WHAT SHE'S
DOING?



...AND IF SHE COULD HIDE
FOREVER BETWEEN THE ROWS
OF DRYING BLANKETS AND
WORK CLOTHES...

...SHE MIGHT HAVE BEEN
TEMPTED TO DO SO.

HAVE YOU
BEEN FOLLOWING
HER?



BUT SHE HAD
RESPONSIBILITIES
NOW...

...A FLOCK TO TEND...

I HOPE
YOU'VE BEEN
CAREFUL.



...AND WHETHER SHE
WANTED TO OR NOT...

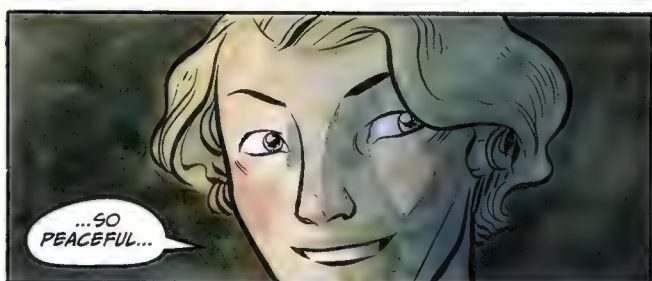
...SHE WOULD FIGHT
TO **PROTECT** THEM.

IF
SHE HAD
SEEN YOU...

...WELL...

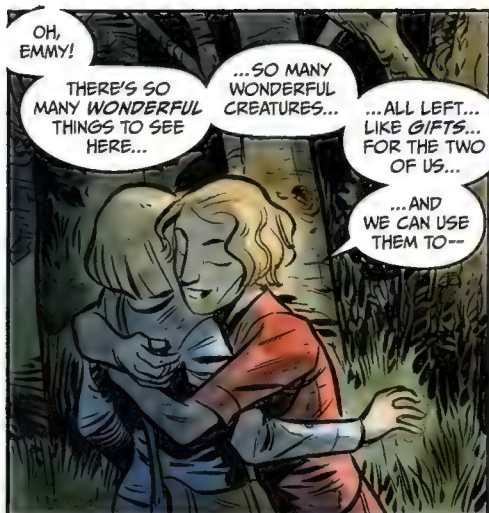












OH,
EMMY!

THERE'S SO
MANY WONDERFUL
THINGS TO SEE
HERE...

...SO MANY
WONDERFUL
CREATURES...

...ALL LEFT...
LIKE GIFTS...
FOR THE TWO
OF US...

...AND
WE CAN USE
THEM TO--



I KNOW
WHAT YOU WANT
TO USE THEM
FOR!



I
KNOW...

...AND I
WON'T STAND
FOR IT!



I THOUGHT
YOU MIGHT SAY
SOMETHING LIKE
THAT.

ALL THIS
POWER...

...SPLIT
BETWEEN THE
TWO OF US...

...AND
WASTED ON
YOU!



WE GOT
ALONG JUST FINE
WITHOUT YOU,
KAMMI.

AND WE'LL
GET ALONG FINE
ONCE YOU'RE
GONE.

YOU DON'T
BELONG
HERE.



DON'T
BELONG
HERE?


IT SHOULD
HAVE BEEN YOU
WHO WAS DRAGGED
FROM THIS PLACE.

THIS
IS MY
HOME...

...MORE
THAN IT IS
YOURS...







ON A NIGHT MUCH
COLDER THAN IT
OUGHT TO'VE BEEN...

...THE HAINTS CAME
FOR EMMY...



...COUNTLESS
HAINTS...

STOP.

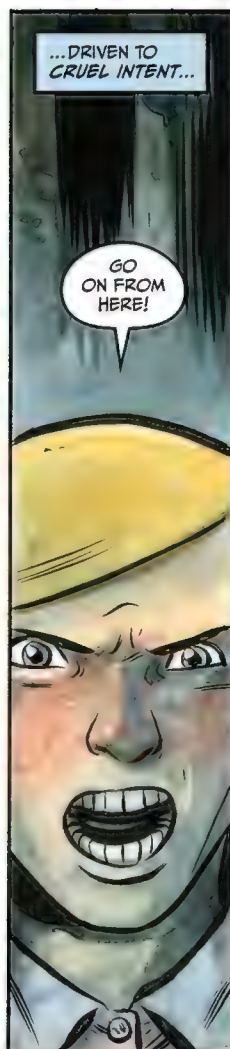
GET
AWAY FROM
ME.



...CRAWLED ON UP
FROM THE DARK PLACES...

ARE YOU
LISTENING?

DID YOU
HEAR WHAT
I SAID?



...DRIVEN TO
CRUEL INTENT...

GO
ON FROM
HERE!



...BY A GIRL WITH AN
ALL-TOO-FAMILIAR FACE.

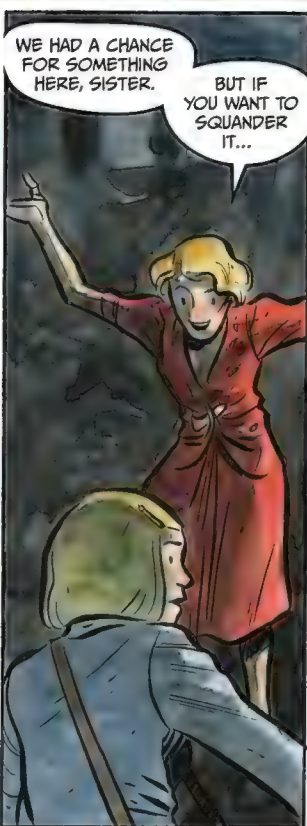
YELLING
WON'T DO YOU
ANY GOOD, DEAR
SISTER.

I'M AFRAID YOU
CAN'T CONTROL THEM
ANYMORE.



MY VOICE
IS THE ONLY ONE
THEY HEAR.







IT WASN'T THE FIRST TIME EMMY
HAD FOUND HERSELF RUNNING
THROUGH THE WOODS...



...NOR WAS IT THE FIRST
TIME HER WORLD SEEMED
AS THOUGH IT HAD TURNED
AGAINST HER...



AHH!



THEY'RE
COMING.

THEY'RE...

...RIGHT
BEHIND
YOU.

STAY
RIGHT THERE,
CHILD.

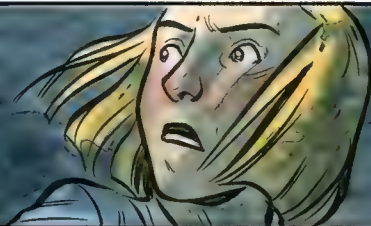
I'LL
HONOR YOU...
HONOR YOU BY
MAKING IT
QUICK!

I'LL
SQUEEZE OUT YOUR
BONE SAUCE FOR
MY BATH!

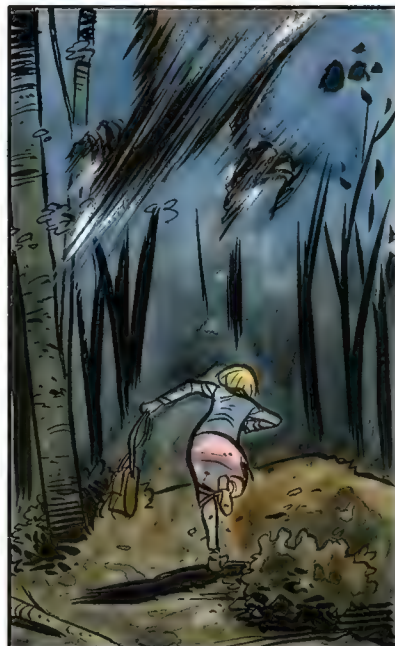


BUT...DESPITE WHAT
KAMMI HAD SAID...

...DESPITE THE FEAR THAT
GRIPPED HER HEART...

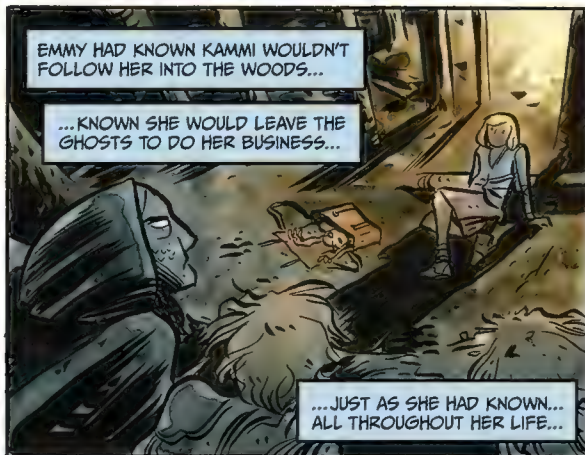


...SHE WAS FAR
FROM HELPLESS.



EMMY HAD KNOWN KAMMI WOULDN'T
FOLLOW HER INTO THE WOODS...

...KNOWN SHE WOULD LEAVE THE
GHOSTS TO DO HER BUSINESS...



...JUST AS SHE HAD KNOWN...
ALL THROUGHOUT HER LIFE...

...THAT SHE WAS
NEVER TRULY ALONE.



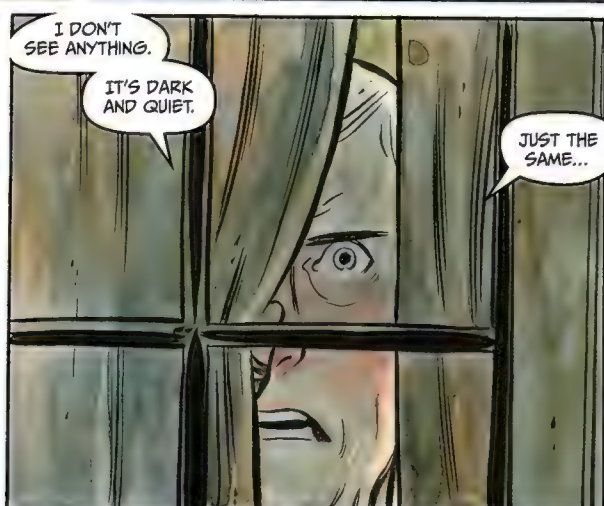
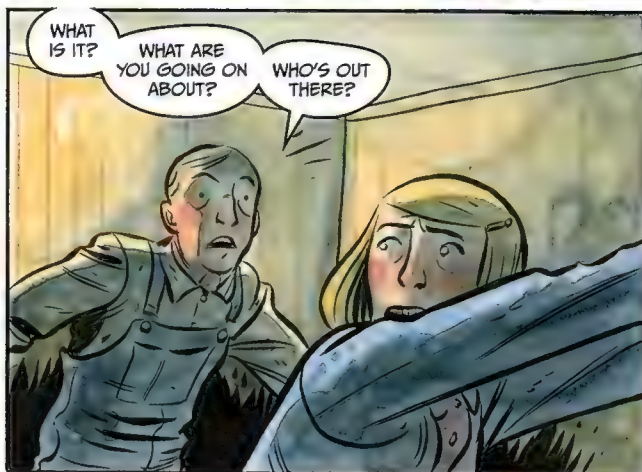
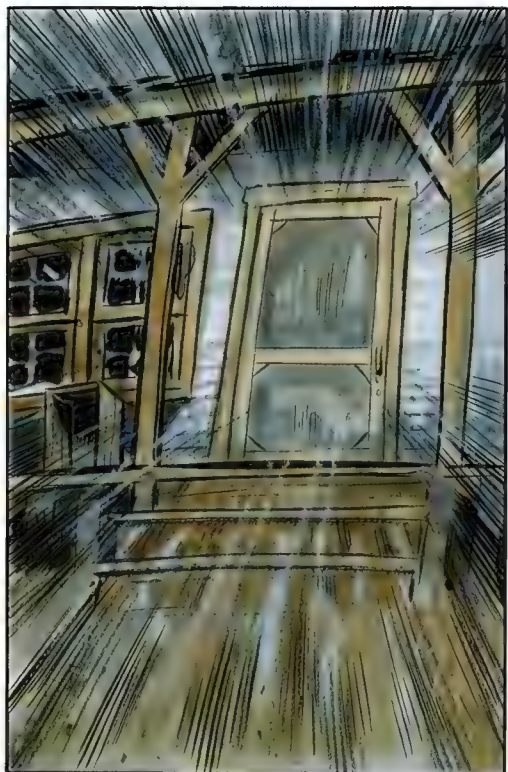
DON'T
YOU DARE KEEP
MY FRIENDS
WAITING.

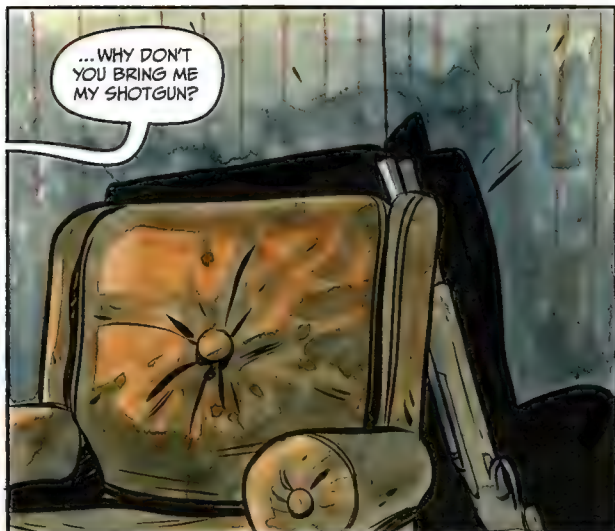


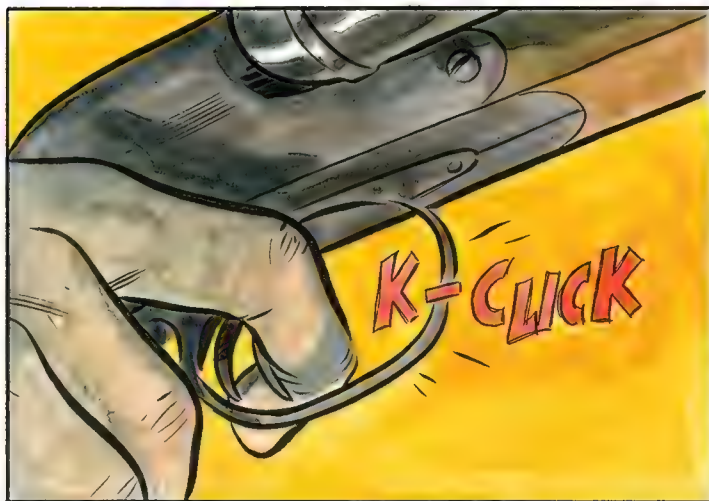




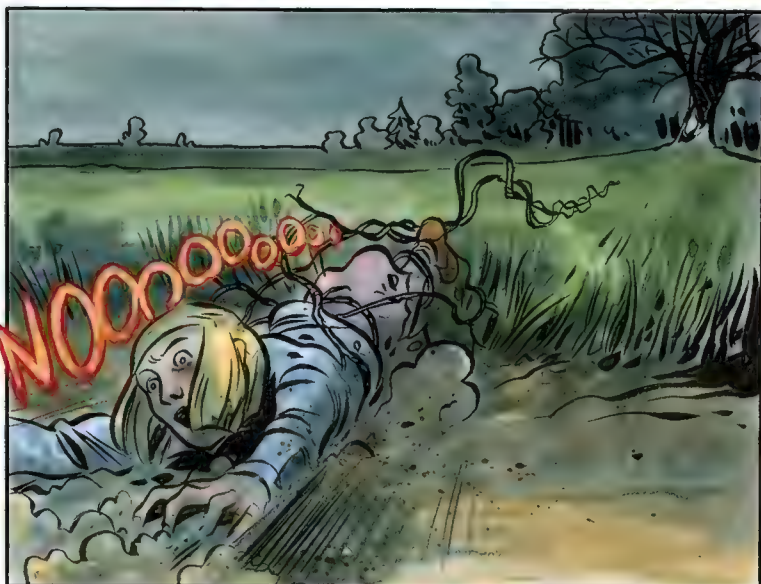
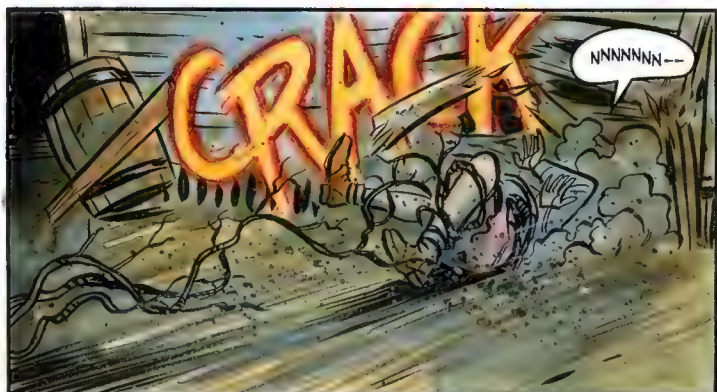
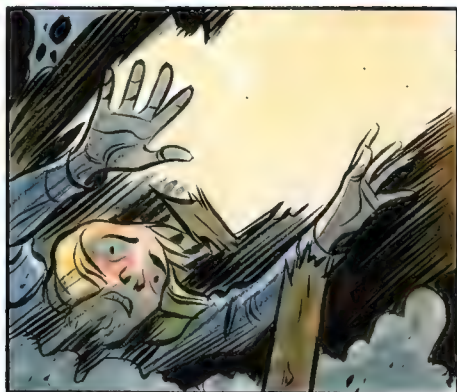
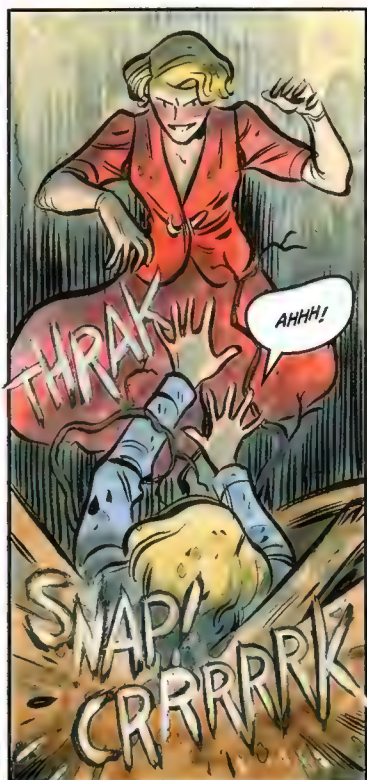

















NEITHER OF THE
GIRLS HAD EVER
SEEN HESTER BECK...

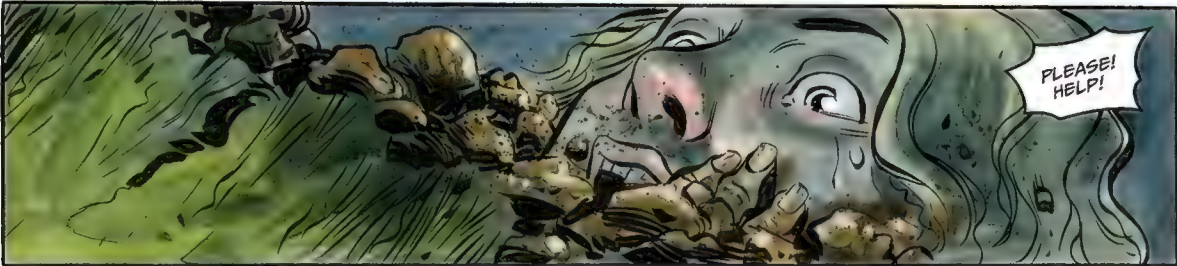
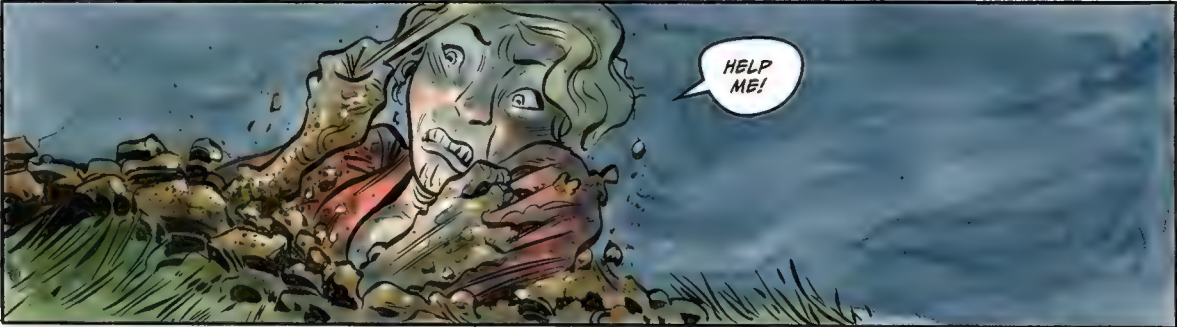
...SAVE IN NIGHTMARES
FOR EMMY...

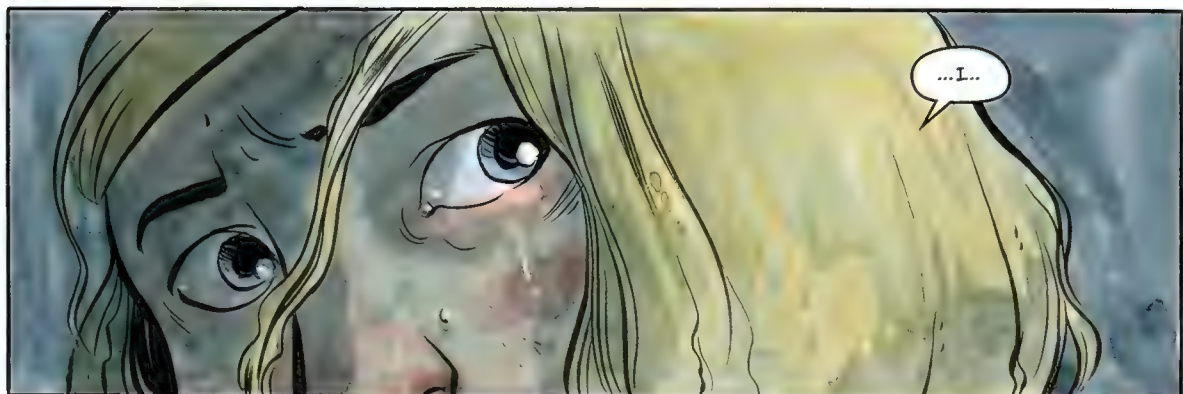
...AND DREAMS
FOR KAMMI.

NOW, THOUGH, AS THE WITCH'S
MOLDERING CORPSE DRAGGED
ITSELF UP FROM THE EARTH...

...AS EYES YAWNED HUNGRILY
AND HER MOUTH CHATTERED
OPEN AND SHUT...

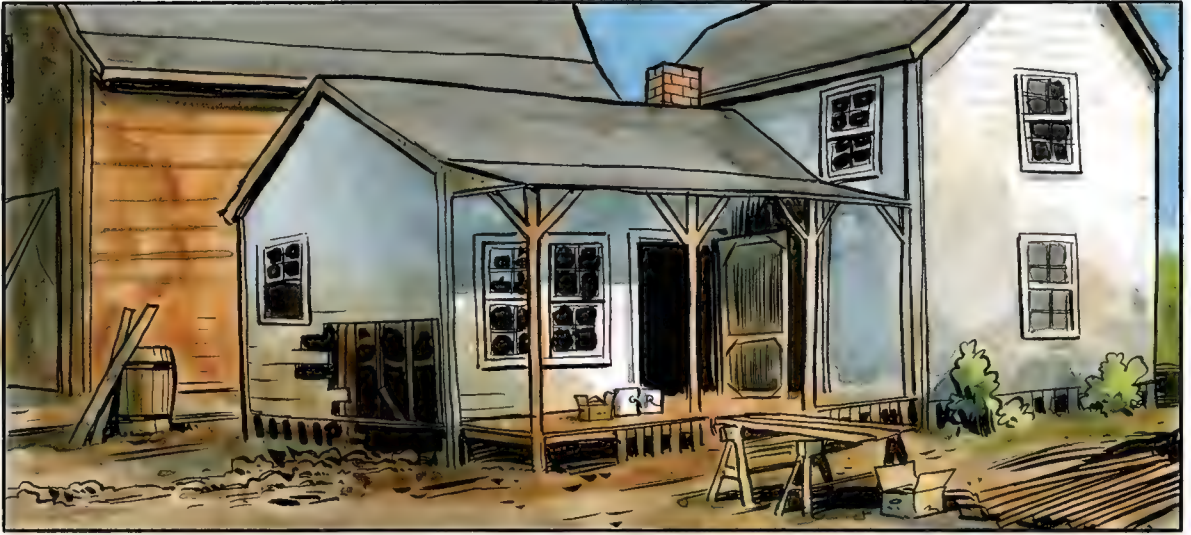
...KAMMI UNDERSTOOD
THE DREAD HER SISTER
HAD ALWAYS FELT.







I'M
SORRY.



I COULD FIX
THE HOUSE UP,
YOU KNOW.

WE DON'T
HAVE TO WORK
SO HARD.



I COULD
CLOSE MY
EYES...

...ENVISION
WHATEVER I
WANT...

...AND MAKE
THINGS AS GOOD
AS NEW.



WELL, NOW...
MAYBE THIS IS
WHAT YOU
WANTED...

...ME AND
YOU REBUILDING
OUR HOME
TOGETHER...

...THE OLD-
FASHIONED
WAY.

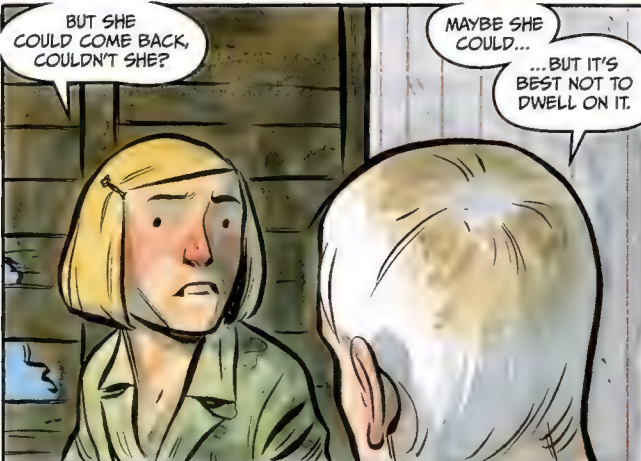
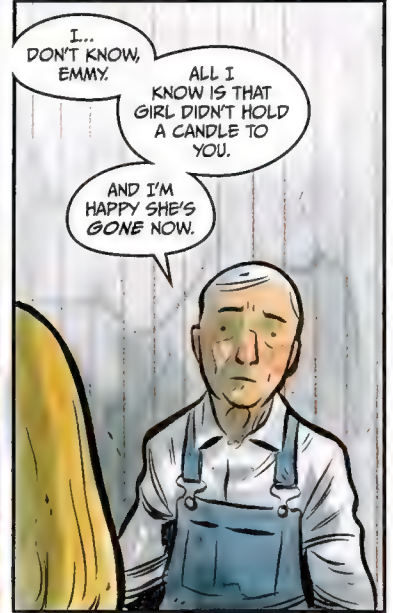
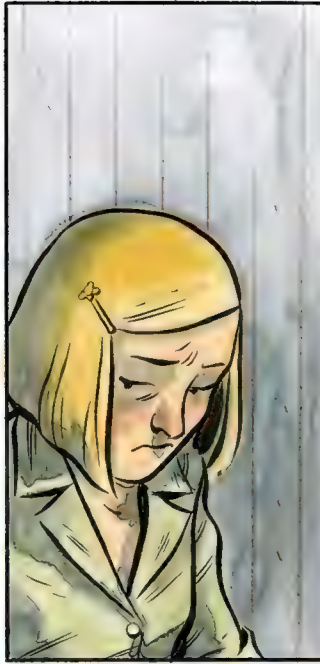


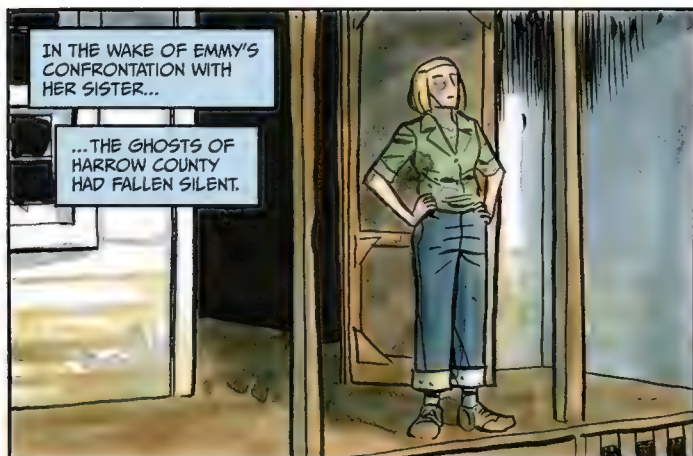
I DON'T
MIND THE
WORK.

IT REMINDS
ME THAT THIS
IS REAL...

...THAT
I'M REAL...

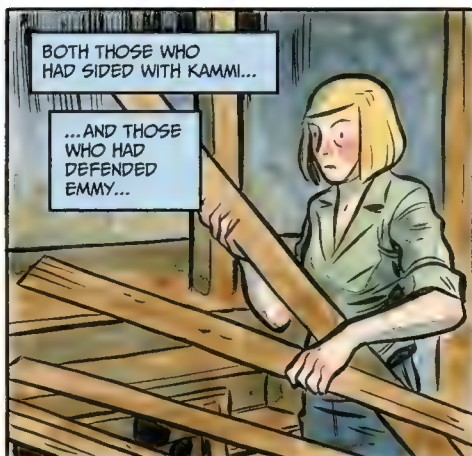
...AND
THAT YOU AND
ME ARE BOTH
REAL, TOO.





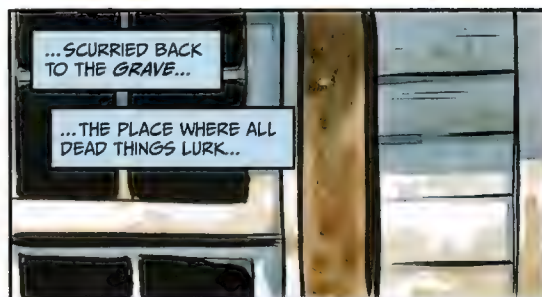
IN THE WAKE OF EMMY'S
CONFRONTATION WITH
HER SISTER...

...THE GHOSTS OF
HARROW COUNTY
HAD FALLEN SILENT.



BOTH THOSE WHO
HAD SIDED WITH KAMMI...

...AND THOSE
WHO HAD
DEFENDED
EMMY...



...SCURRIED BACK
TO THE GRAVE...

...THE PLACE WHERE ALL
DEAD THINGS LURK...

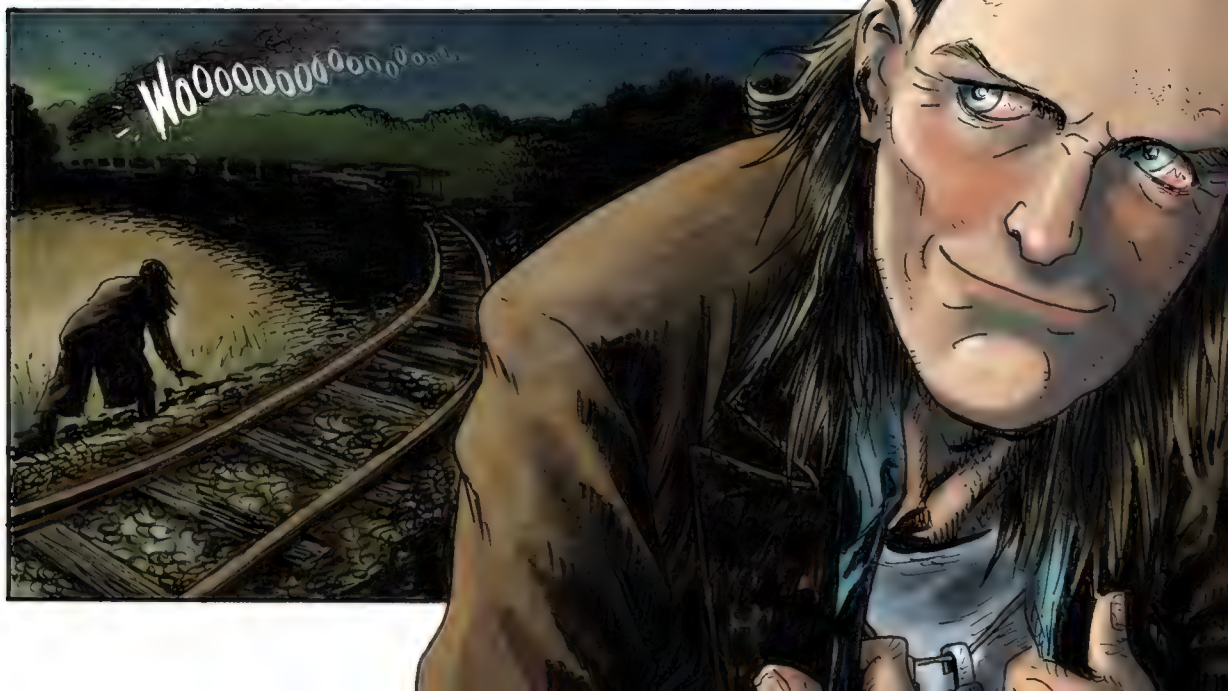
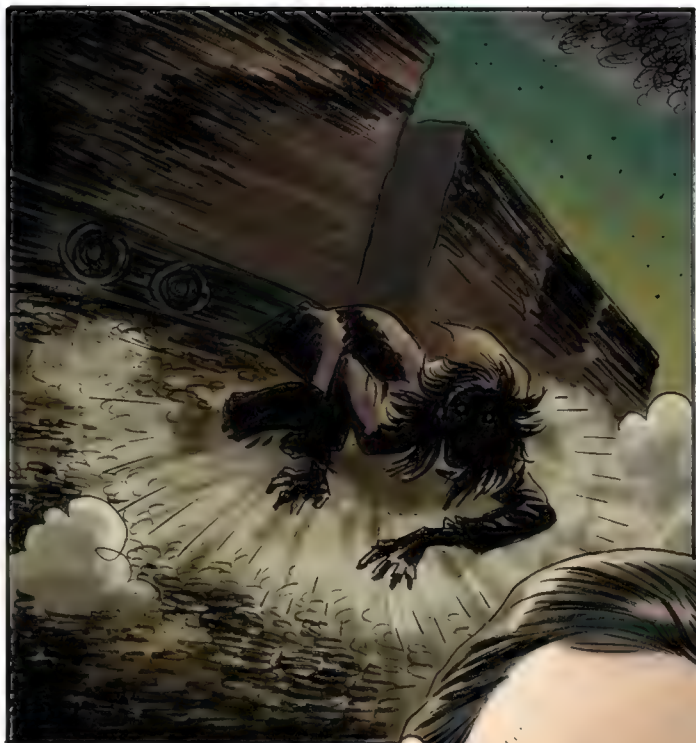
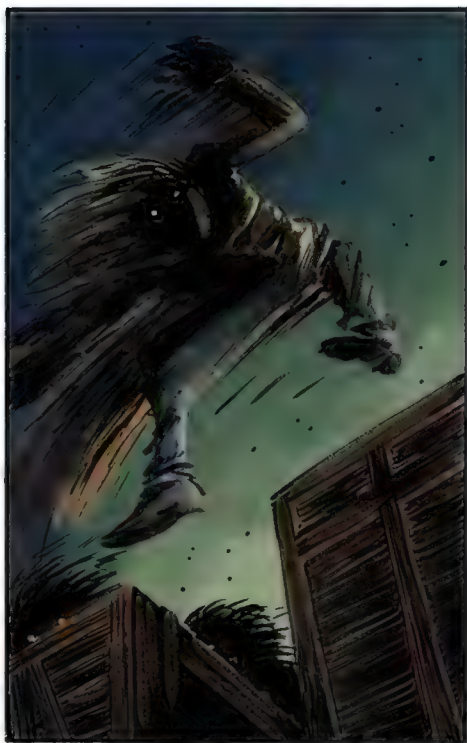
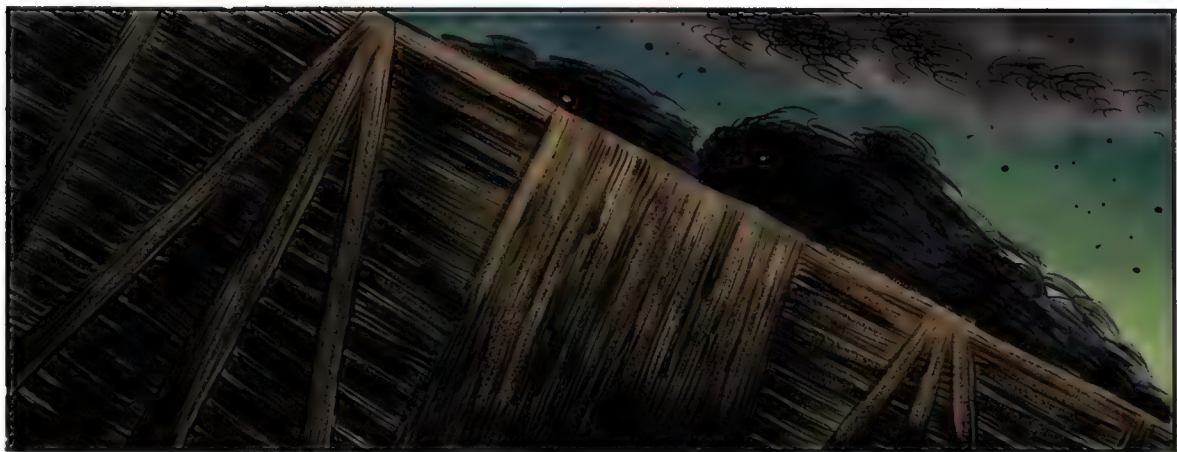


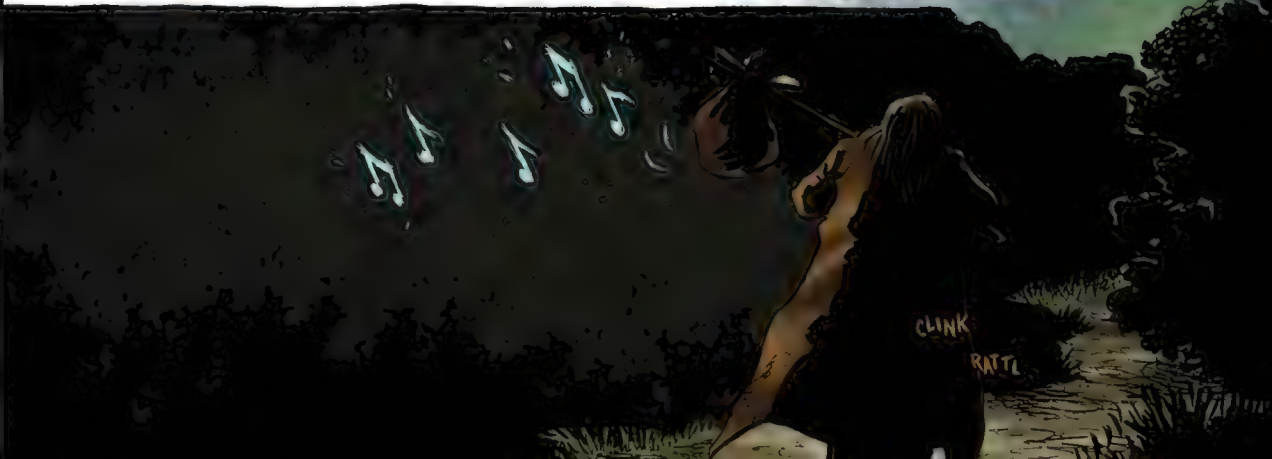
...DREAMING OF THE
TIME WHEN THEY
MIGHT LIVE AGAIN.

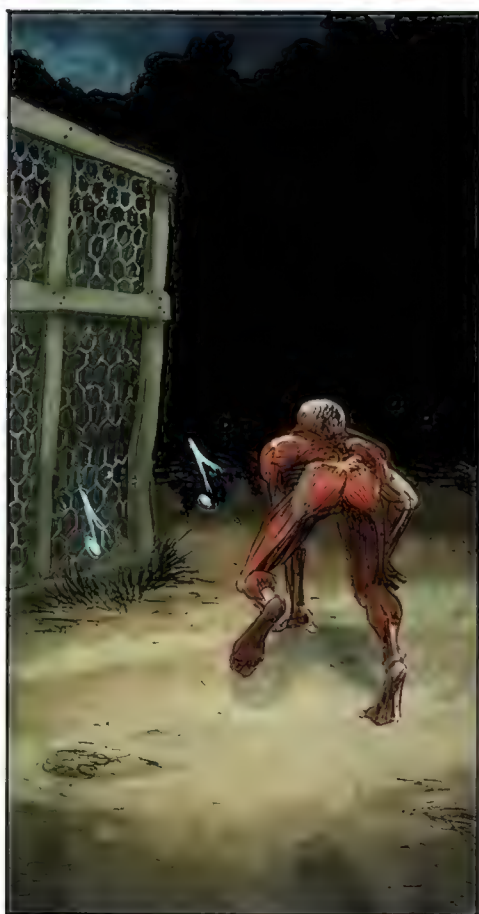
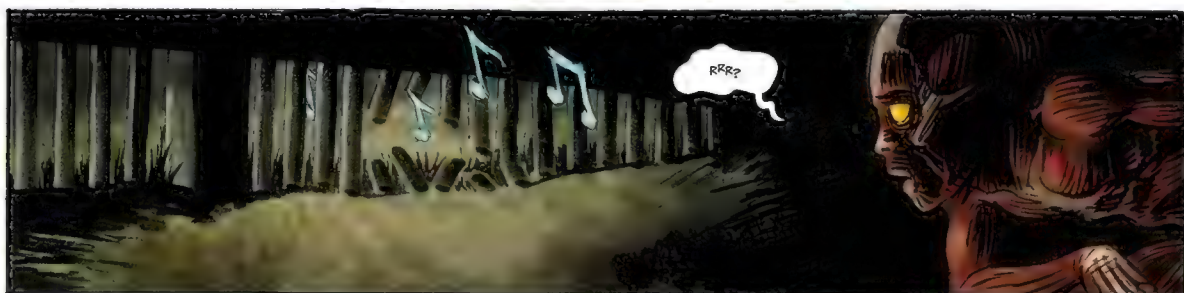


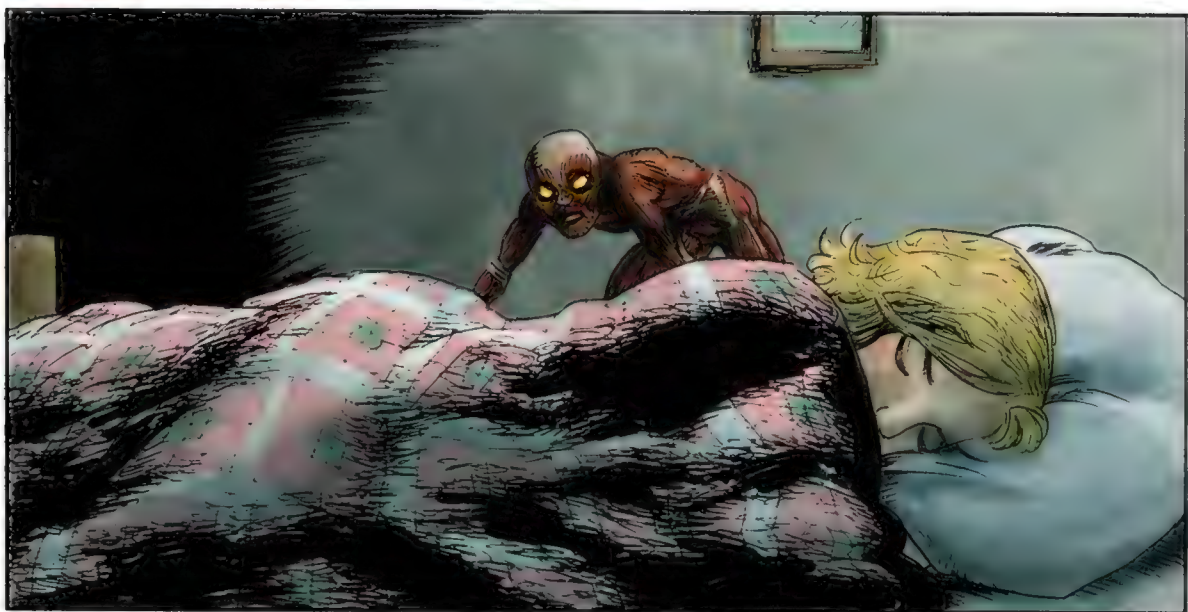
NINE

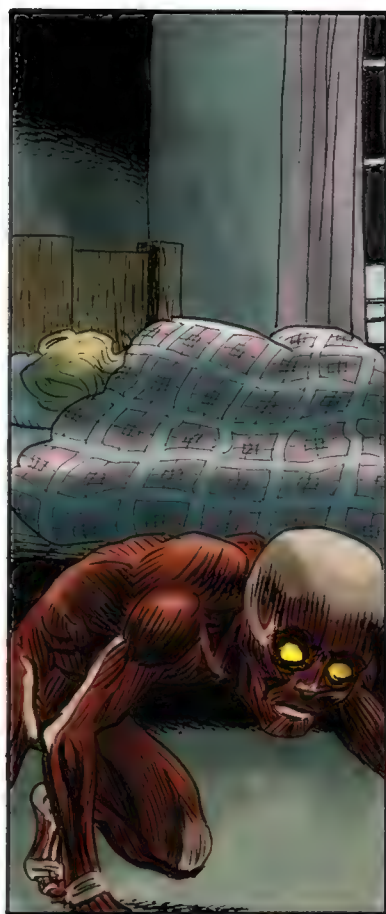


















NO?

WELL, SUIT YOURSELF.

PARDON ME FOR EATING IN FRONT OF YOU...BUT I'VE BEEN TRAVELING FOR SOME TIME TO GET HOME.



SNF

MM. THAT'S RIGHT. THAT'S GOOD.

PICKLED UP NICE AND SALTY AND TART THE WAY I LIKE.



YOU SURE YOUR OTHER SELF DON'T WANT A TASTE?

ALTHOUGH HE AIN'T GOT NO TEETH TO TEAR GRISTLE...

...NO TONGUE TO SAVOR THE FLAVOR.



RECKON IT AIN'T PIGS' FEET YOU WANT ANYHOW.

SHLOP

IS IT?

THSSST

AIN'T WHAT I PREFER, NEITHER. PRETTY WEAK SUBSTITUTE, REALLY.



BECAUSE THEY AIN'T NOTHING QUITE SO TASTY AS LONG PIGS.



I'D ASK YOU YOUR NAME. BUT YOU DON'T KNOW IT, DO YOU?

ALL THEM THINGS YOU DO REMEMBER... DON'T IT STRIKE YOU STRANGE YOUR OWN NAME'S NOT AMONG THEM?



WE HEAR OUR NAME IN A DREAM, THAT'S WHEN WE WAKE UP.



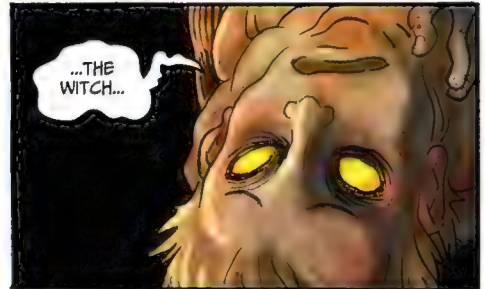
Y'WANTA TELL
ME HOW YOU USED
TO GO FISHING
HEREABOUTS?

HOW YOU CAUGHT
YOU A GARFISH AND
YOU THOUGHT YOU SNAGGED
UP SOME DEVIL FROM
THE DARK?

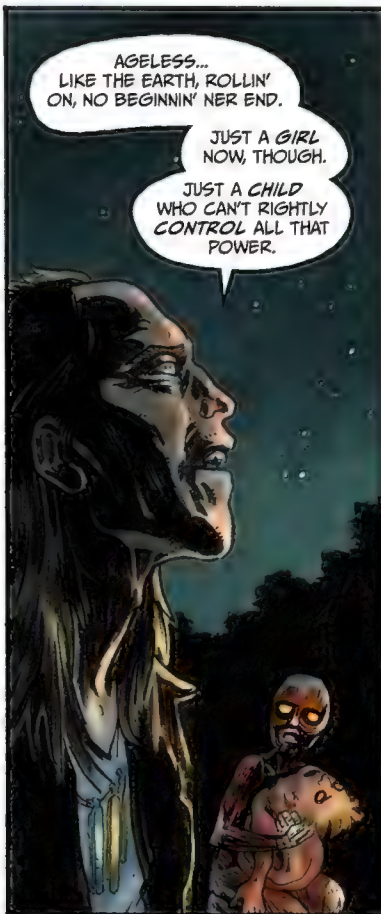


THIS
MUD...

...WHERE ALL
THEM YEARS AGO HESTER
BECK GAVE SHAPE TO THEM
WHAT SERVED HER.



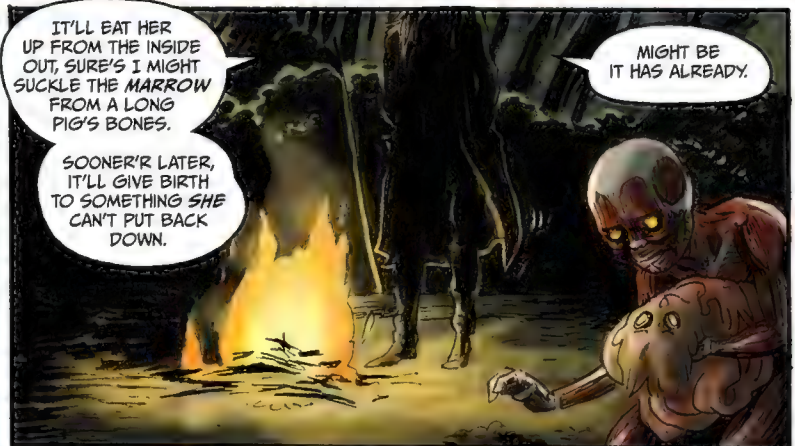
...THE
WITCH...



AGELESS...
LIKE THE EARTH, ROLLIN'
ON, NO BEGINNIN' NER END.

JUST A GIRL
NOW, THOUGH.

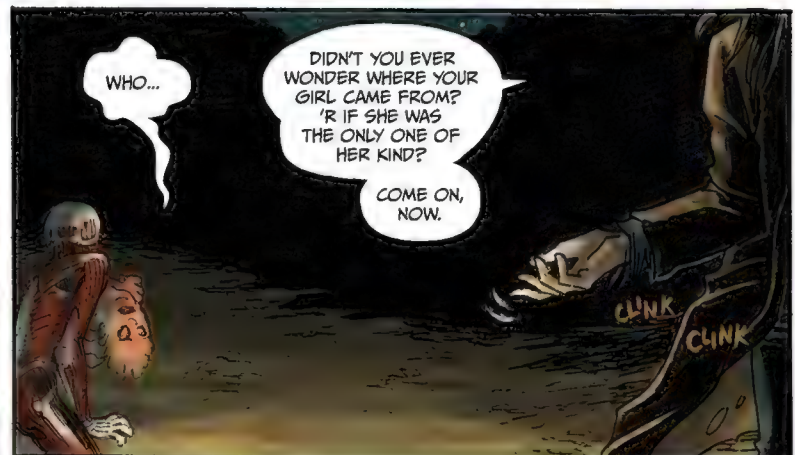
JUST A CHILD
WHO CAN'T RIGHTLY
CONTROL ALL THAT
POWER.



IT'LL EAT HER
UP FROM THE INSIDE
OUT, SURE'S I MIGHT
SUCKLE THE MARROW
FROM A LONG
PIG'S BONES.

SOONER'R LATER,
IT'LL GIVE BIRTH
TO SOMETHING SHE
CAN'T PUT BACK
DOWN.

MIGHT BE
IT HAS ALREADY.



WHO...

DIDN'T YOU EVER
WONDER WHERE YOUR
GIRL CAME FROM?
'R IF SHE WAS
THE ONLY ONE OF
HER KIND?

COME ON,
NOW.

CLUNK
CLUNK



THERE'S MUCH
TO SEE BEFORE
THE NIGHT'S
DONE.



SQUEEER!



HHHHHHH...



YOU THINK
YOU REMEMBER
THIS, TOO?

YOU REMEMBER
CHASING RABBITS?

BUT YOU
WEREN'T QUICK ENOUGH
TO CATCH THEM BEFORE,
WERE YOU?



NOW YOU
GOT ONE...WHAT
YOU GONNA DO
WITH IT?



I RECKON YOU
RECOLLECT *THIS*
PLACE, TOO,
DON'T YOU?

THE BRIAR
TANGLES.



THIS IS WHERE
YOUR WITCH FOUND
THAT SKIN OF
YOURS...

...TATTERED AND
TORN AND HANGING
IN THE THORNY
VINES...

...LIKE THE
WASH HUNG UP
TO DRY...



...AMIDST
ALL THE
BLOOD.



BUT YOU
REMEMBER SOMETHING
ELSE, DON'T YOU?

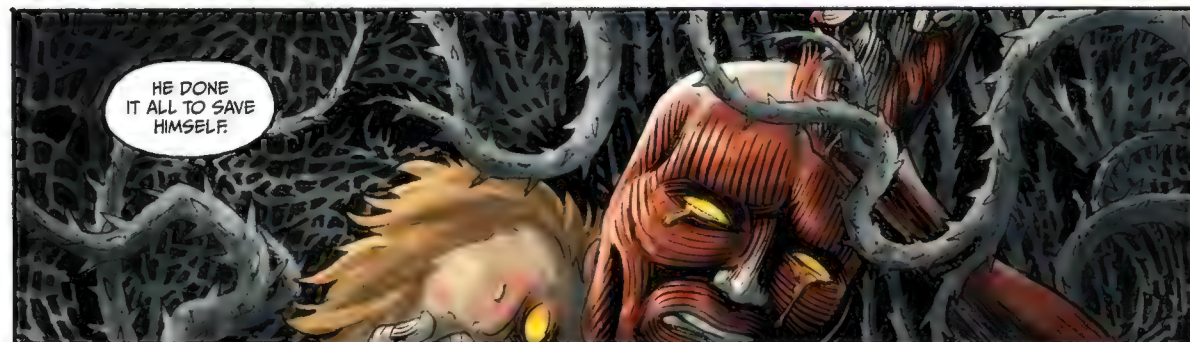
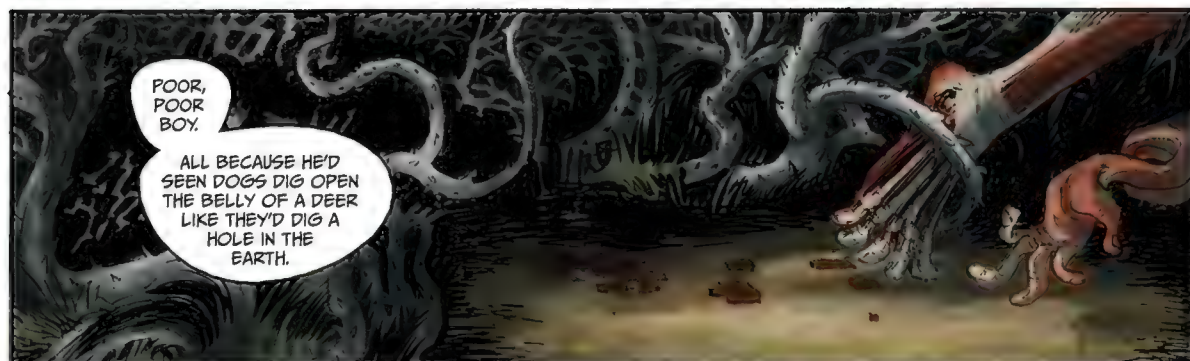
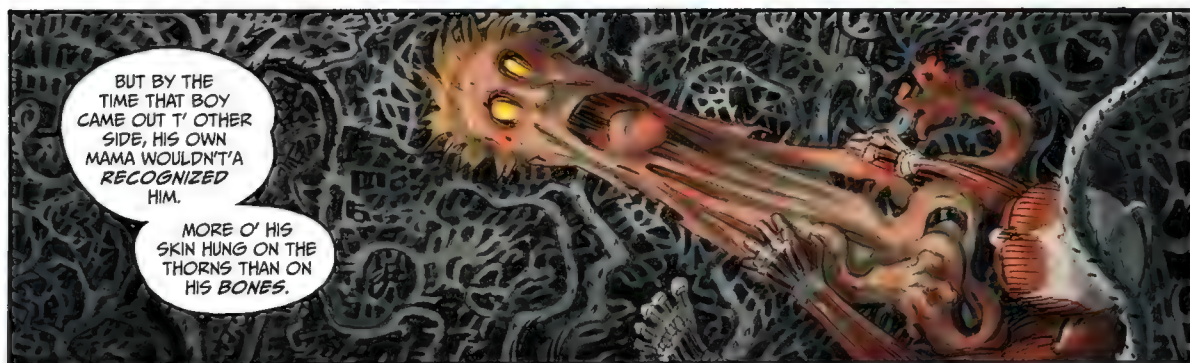


SOMETHING
THAT MAKES YOU
DREAD THESE
BRIARS...



...AND
WHAT THEY
CAN DO.

HSSSSK!





ROSES, YOU
KNOW, CAN WARD
OFF THE DEAD.

BUT YOU
PASS RIGHT ON
THROUGH.

COUPLE CUTS,
SOME SCRAPES,
BUT OTHERWISE
UNHINDERED.

AIN'T THAT
SOMETHING?



AND LOOK
HERE WHAT YOU'VE
FOUND.



IS THAT
RIGHT?

IS THIS
WHERE YOU
GREW UP?

HHHOME..

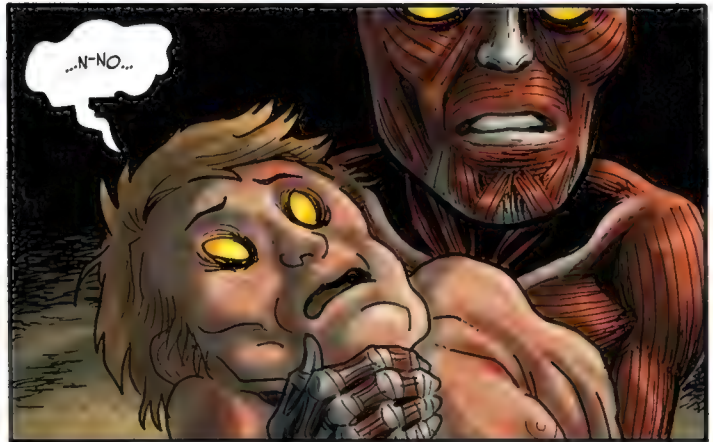


IS THIS
WHERE YOU LIVED...
REALLY LIVED...



FORE YOUR
SKIN GOT TORE
RIGHT OFF YOU...AND
YOUR NAME ALONG
WITH IT?

SLURP







...WHAT ARE
YOU DOING
HERE...

MY BED MY
HOME

YOU CANT
BE HHEERE..



OH,
BUT HE
CAN.

THAT'S WHAT
I BEEN TRYIN' TO
LEARN YA.

THAT'S WHY
YOU PASSED THROUGH
THOSE ROSES...
BECAUSE YOU'RE
ONLY HALF-DEAD.

AND THAT'S
WHY YOU DON'T
REMEMBER YOUR
NAME.



WHEN OLD HESTER
CALLED UP ALL THOSE
CREATURES...

WHERE DO YOU
THINK SHE GOT
THEM?

THAT WITCH...
SHE PULLS US RIGHT
OUT OF THE AIR...
RIGHT OUT OF SOME
POOR SOD'S
DREAMS...

AS EASY
AS PICKING
FIREFLIES FROM
THE AIR.



THIS LIFE...
BELONGS TO
MMEE.



YYOU CCANT
SSTEAL ITT!



YYOU
CCANT
SSTEAL
MHY
NNAAME!

G-GO AWAY.

PLEASE
PLEASE
PLEASE GO
AWAYYY.



TTEHLL
ME!

TTELL ME
MHY NNAAME!



THIS IS
WHO I AM,
CHILD.

I'M THE
BOGEYMAN'S
BOGEYMAN.

AND I'M
OFFERING YOU
THE CHANCE--

THE CHANCE
TO BE WHOLE
AGAIN!



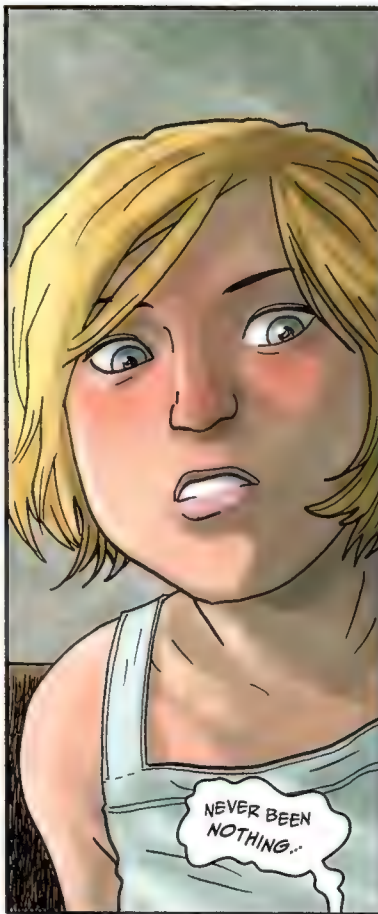
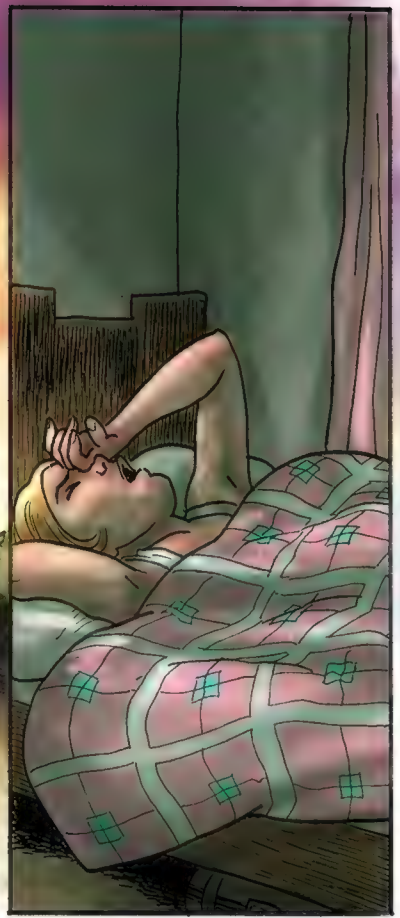
L-LEAVE
ME ALONE.

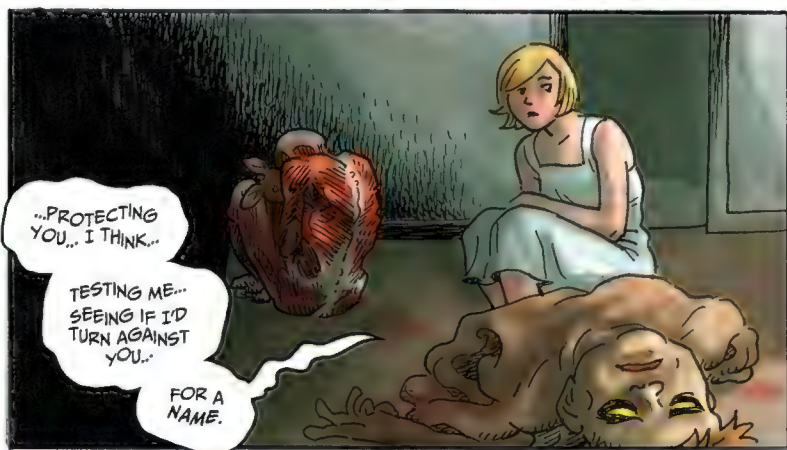
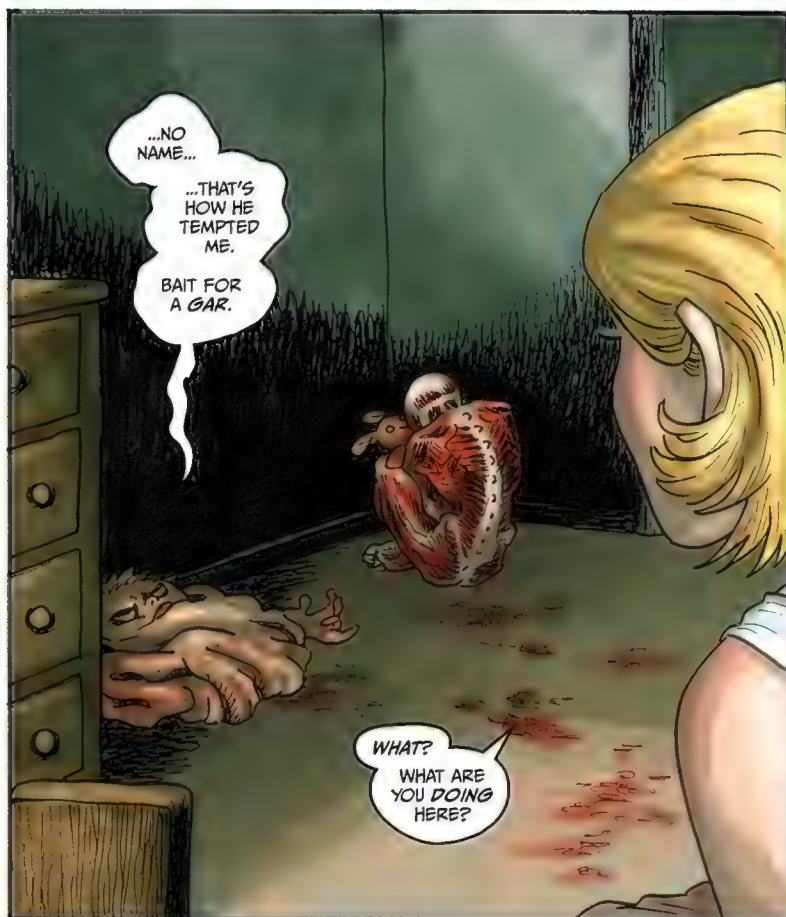
I-I'M
AWAKE
NOW.

SO YOU
HAVE TO LEAVE
ME ALONE,
PLEASE!



MHY
NNAME!





"DID YOU HAVE
A NIGHTMARE?"



CALEB?
CALEB,
YOU UP?



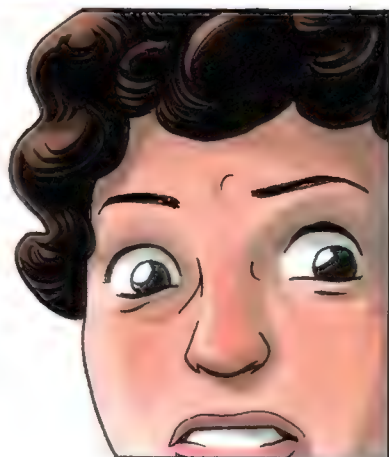
COME ON,
YOU SLEEPYHEAD.

ONCE YOUR
DADDY GETS BACK
FROM TOWN, THERE'LL
BE PLENTY TO DO.

HE MIGHT
BE CROSS WITH THE
BOTH OF US IF HE KNEW
I LET YOU SLEEP~~



CALEB?









YOU KNOW, CLINTON...



...THESE BERRIES WON'T PICK THEMSELVES.



YOU DON'T HELP WITH THE PICKING...

...YOU DON'T GET SECONDS OF YOUR GRANNY'S BLACKBERRY---



OW!



THOUGHT YOU SAID YOU DIDN'T EVER GET STUCK BY A BLACKBERRY THORN, UNCLE EARLY.

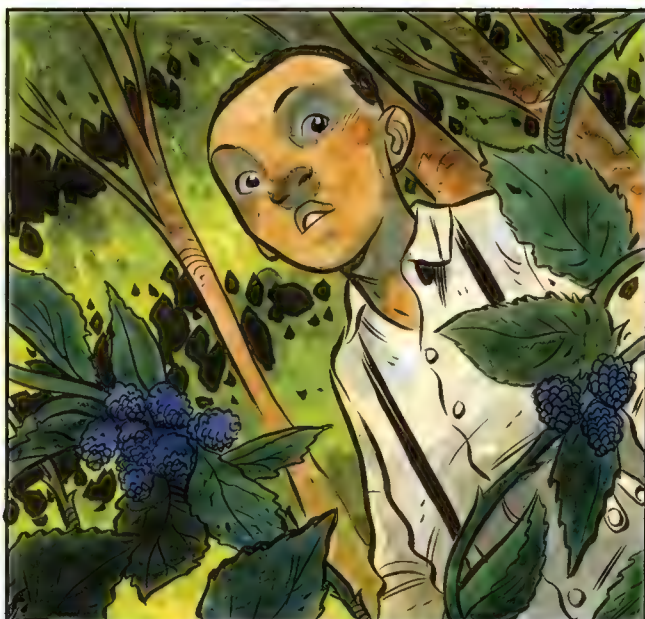
THOUGHT YOU SAID THE BLACKBERRIES KNEW BETTER THAN TO TRY AND POKE YOU.

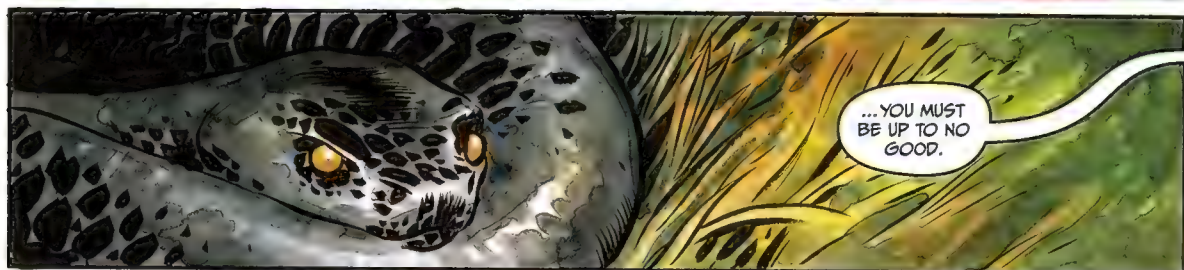
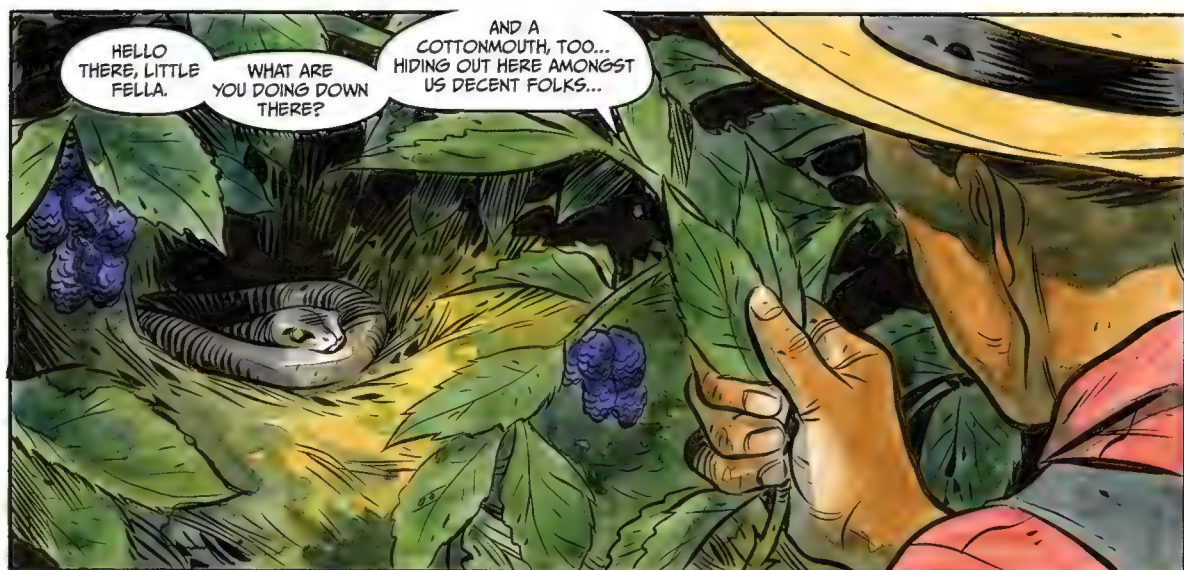


NEVER MIND WHAT I SAID.

ON SECOND THOUGHT...I WISH YOU WOULD GET ON FROM HERE.

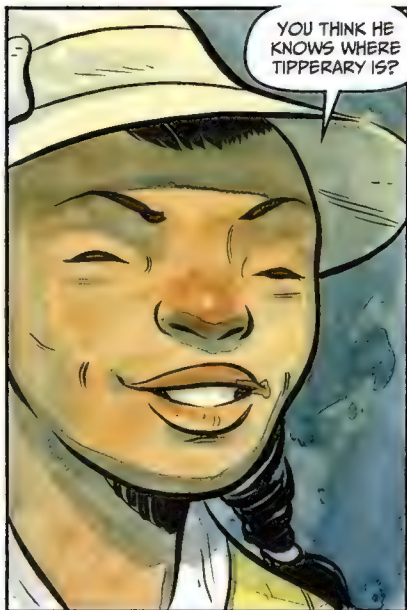
LAST THING I NEED IS YOUR HELP.

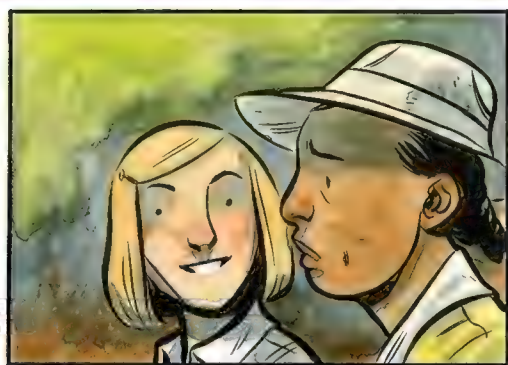










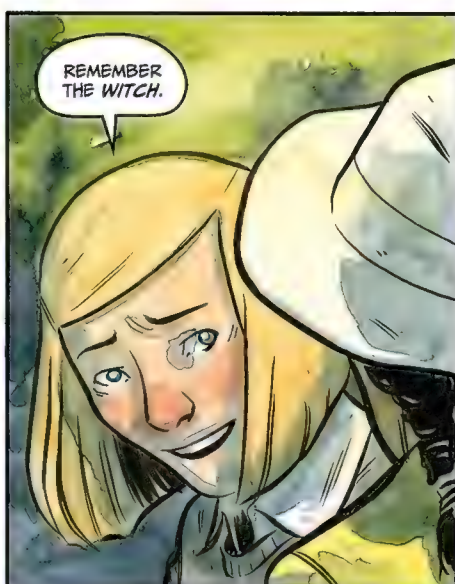




I JUST
KNOW HOW FOLKS
ARE, IS ALL.

THEY DON'T
CARE IF YOU'RE
YOUR OWN
WOMAN.

THEY
JUST--



REMEMBER
THE WITCH.



I
SUPPOSE
SO.

I'M...
SORRY.

IT'S ALL
RIGHT.

WE'LL
FIGURE IT OUT
ONE DAY.



THANKS FOR
WALKING WITH ME,
EMMY.

SOMETIMES...
OUT HERE...

...WELL,
IT'S GOOD TO
HAVE COMPANY.



YOU KNOW
I'D NEVER LET
ANYTHING HAPPEN
TO YOU.

THERE'S
NOTHING OUT HERE
THAT WOULD HARM
YOU...

...NOT AS
LONG AS I'M
WITH YOU.



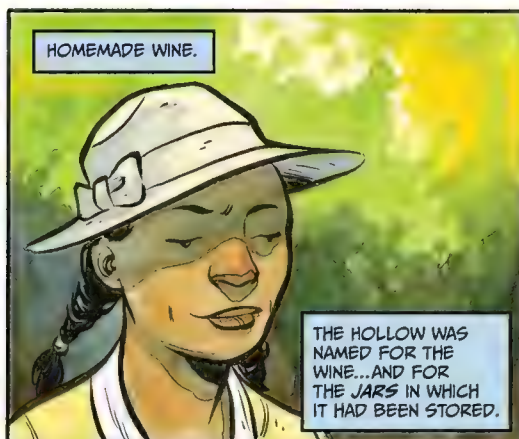
BUT YOU
CAN'T ALWAYS BE
WITH ME...

...CAN
YOU?



IN THE RIGHT LIGHT, THE PATH LEADING TO MASON HOLLOW *GLITTERED* AS IF IT HAD BEEN PAVED WITH *JEWELS*.

ONCE, NOT ALL THAT LONG AGO, THE HOLLOW ENJOYED A BRISK TRADE WITH THE REST OF HARROW COUNTY.



HOMEMADE WINE.

THE HOLLOW WAS NAMED FOR THE WINE...AND FOR THE *JARS* IN WHICH IT HAD BEEN STORED.



THE WINE HAD BEEN SERVED WITH MANY A MEAL THROUGHOUT THE COUNTY.

FOLKS CAME FROM MILES AROUND FOR THE WINE...PURCHASING IT BY THE CRATEFUL.



A FEW YEARS BACK, THOUGH, GOVERNMENT MEN HAD COME TO THE HOLLOW.

THEY SMASHED *THOUSANDS* OF THE *JARS*.



THE EARTH TURNED MUDDY WITH SPILLED WINE.

AND THE GLASS FRAGMENTS OF SHATTERED *JARS* PEPPERED THE GROUND.



THERE WERE STILL THOSE
IN THE HOLLOW WHO BREWED
THEIR OWN DRINK...

...BUT THERE WAS NO
COMMERCE WITH THE
REST OF HARROW...

...AND THE COMMUNITY
SUFFERED FOR IT.



AFTERNOON,
BERNICE.

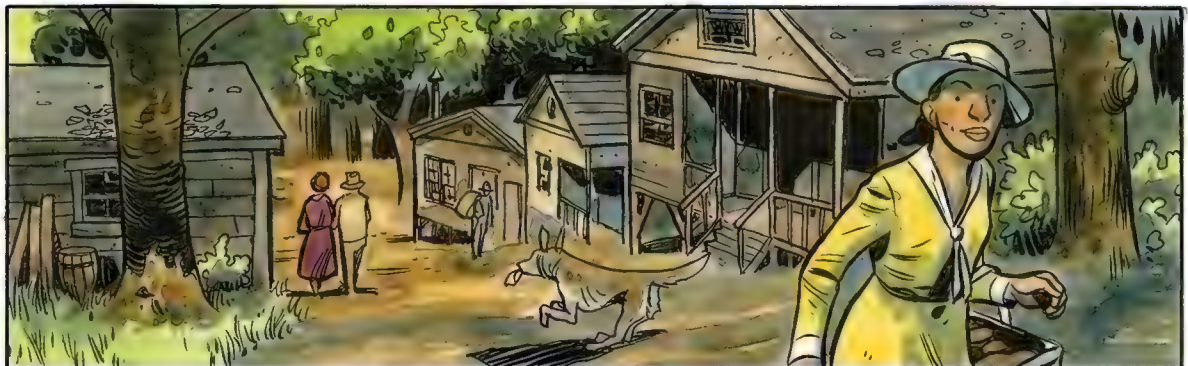
HOW
DO?

REMIND YOUR
GRANDPA THAT Y'ALL
ARE HAVING SUPPER
WITH US TOMORROW
EVENING.



DON'T WORRY,
MISS JANIE.

GRANDPA WOULDN'T
MISS OUT ON YOUR SWEET
POTATOES FOR ANYTHING
IN THE WORLD.











GRANDPA...

WELL,
LOOK AT
THAT.

YOU COME
HOME ABOUT THE
TIME I FINISH THE
DAY'S CHORES.



GRANDPA...
WHY IS IT THAT FOLKS
ARE SO AFRAID OF OLD
LADY LOVEY?

SHE DON'T
NEVER COME
AROUND.

DON'T NEVER
BOTHER ANYONE.

WHY'RE YOU
SO CONCERNED WITH
THAT OLD WOMAN?

DON'T NO
GOOD COME FROM
WONDERING ABOUT LOVEY,
AND YOU KNOW IT.



I KNOW
NO SUCH
THING.

I HEAR
STORIES, SAME AS
EVERYONE ELSE.

I HEAR SHE CALLS
PEOPLE OUT IN THE DEAD
OF NIGHT...LURES THEM INTO
THE WOODS FOR LORD
KNOWS WHAT...

...BUT I DON'T
KNOW OF ANYONE WHO'S
ACTUALLY BEEN CALLED
IN SUCH A WAY.

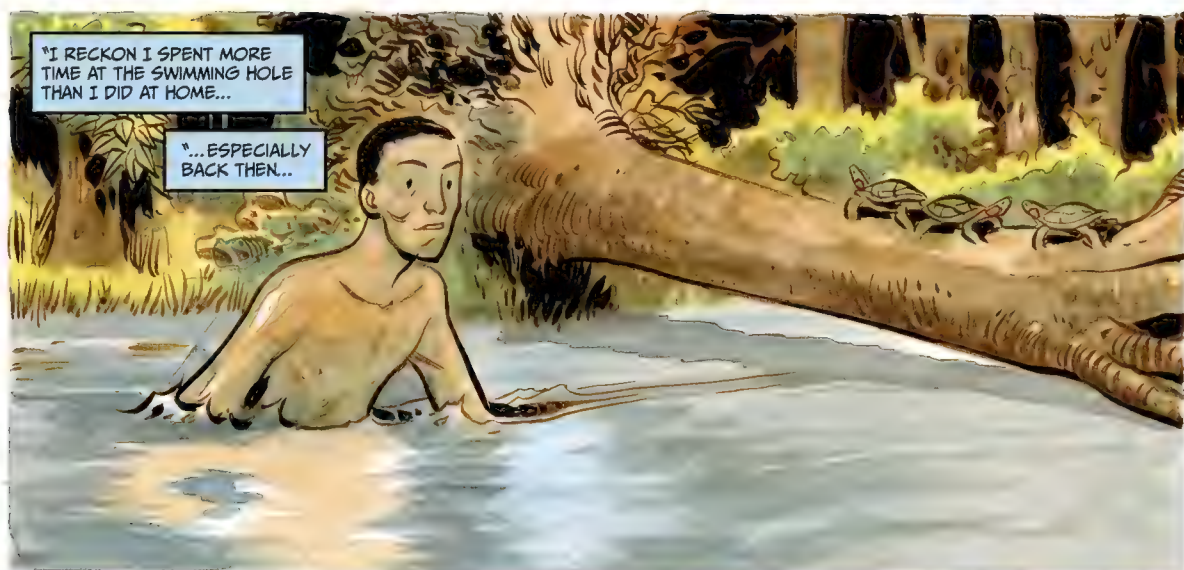


YOU HEED
MY WORDS,
CHILD.

THAT WOMAN
IS A FELL
SORT.

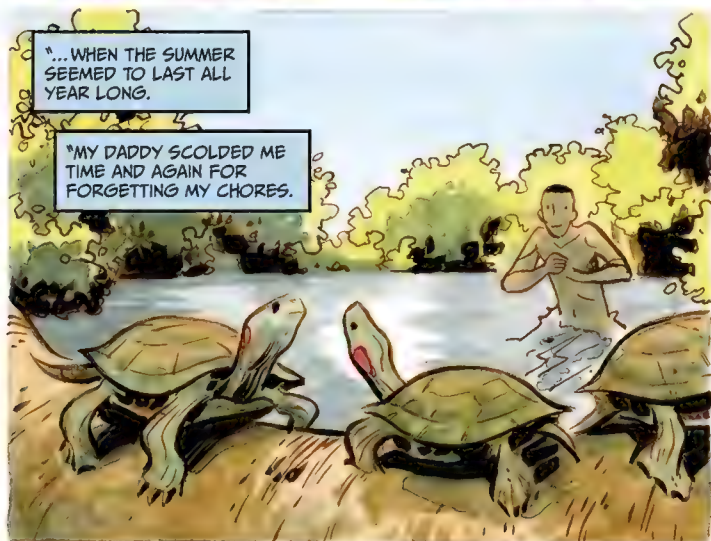
YOU REMEMBER
WHAT I TOLD YOU,
DON'T YOU?

YOU
REMEMBER
WHAT I SAW
WHEN I WAS
A CHILD?



"I RECKON I SPENT MORE TIME AT THE SWIMMING HOLE THAN I DID AT HOME..."

"...ESPECIALLY BACK THEN..."



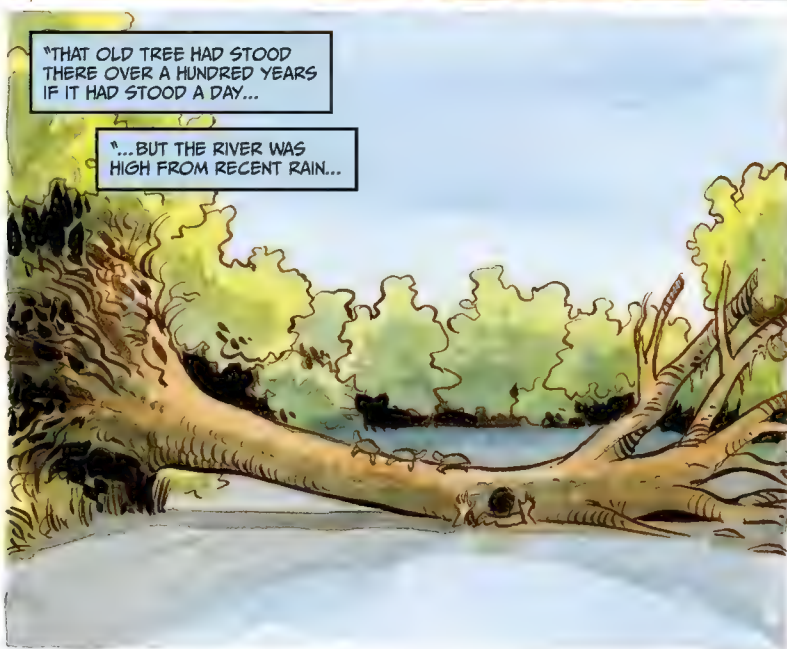
"...WHEN THE SUMMER SEEMED TO LAST ALL YEAR LONG."

"MY DADDY SCOLDED ME TIME AND AGAIN FOR FORGETTING MY CHORES."



"BUT I IMAGINED HE WOULDN'T MIND SO MUCH..."

"...NOT IF I BROUGHT BACK A FEW TURTLES FOR THE SOUP POT."



"THAT OLD TREE HAD STOOD THERE OVER A HUNDRED YEARS IF IT HAD STOOD A DAY..."

"...BUT THE RIVER WAS HIGH FROM RECENT RAIN..."



"...AND THOSE ROOTS WERE LOOSE IN THE MUD."

"THE TREE MIGHT'VE FALLEN..."



"...BUT IT WAS STILL
TEEMING WITH LIFE.

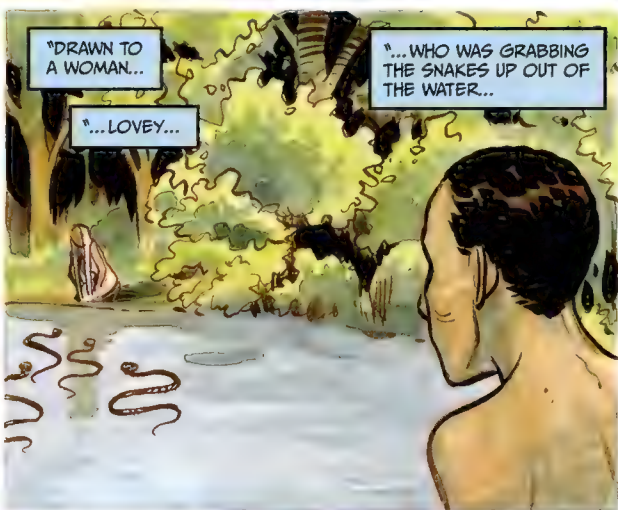


"I THOUGHT I'D SEEN
MY LAST DAY.

"I STILL DON'T KNOW
HOW I MANAGED TO
AVOID GETTING BIT.



"BUT THOSE MOCCASINS
WERE DRAWN AWAY FROM ME.



"DRAWN TO
A WOMAN...

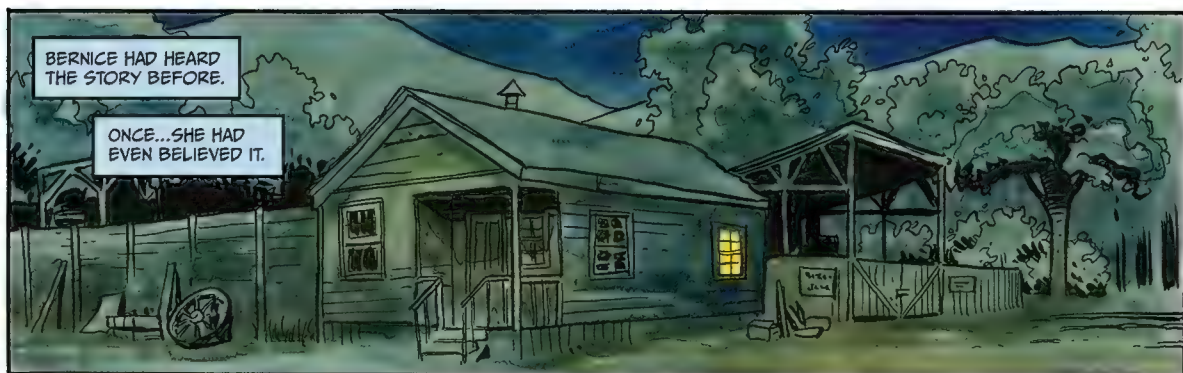
"...LOVEY...

"...WHO WAS GRABBING
THE SNAKES UP OUT OF
THE WATER...



"...WHISPERING
TO THEM...

"...LIKE SHE WAS SCOLDING
A WAYWARD CHILD."



BERNICE HAD HEARD
THE STORY BEFORE.

ONCE...SHE HAD
EVEN BELIEVED IT.



BUT SHE HAD SINCE
LEARNED MANY TRUTHS
ABOUT HER GRANDFATHER...

...AND ABOUT
HERSELF...



...THAT MADE THE OLD
TALES SOUND LIKE LIES.

FACT WAS...HER
GRANDFATHER HAD
NEVER BEEN A BOY.



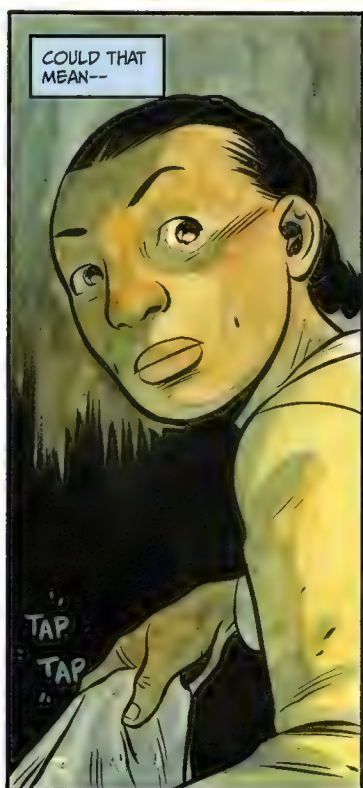
HE HAD BEEN RAISED,
FULLY GROWN, FROM
THE MUD...

...GIVEN LIFE BY THE
WITCH HESTER BECK.



HIS STORIES...
HIS MEMORIES...
COULDN'T HOLD TRUE...

...BECAUSE HE HADN'T
EVEN BEEN ALIVE WHEN
THEY WERE SUPPOSED
TO HAVE HAPPENED.



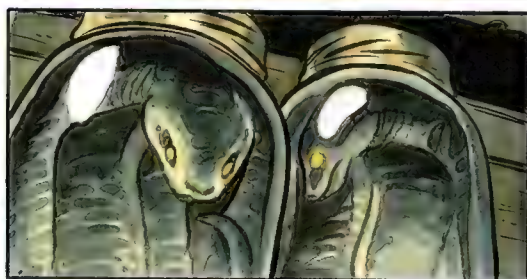
COULD THAT
MEAN--

TAP
TAP












26

ELEVEN



SNAKES...
MAYBE HUNDREDS
OF THEM...


...ALL OF THEM SLITHERING
AROUND INSIDE MASON JARS.



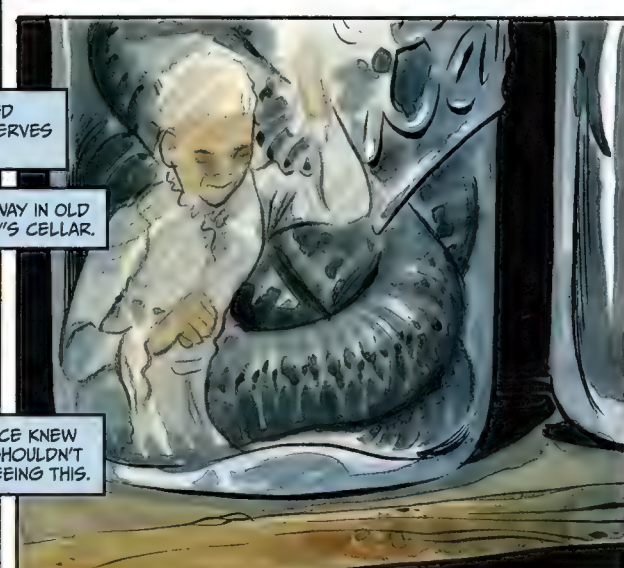
ALMOST ALL OF
THEM, NEAR ABOUT.

THE JARS WERE STORED
LIKE HOMEMADE PRESERVES
ON THE SHELVES...

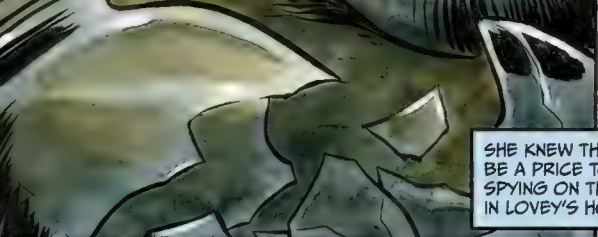
...HIDDEN AWAY IN OLD
LADY LOVEY'S CELLAR.



BERNICE KNEW
SHE SHOULDN'T
BE SEEING THIS.



SHE KNEW THERE WOULD
BE A PRICE TO PAY FOR
SPYING ON THE GOINGS-ON
IN LOVEY'S HOUSE THAT NIGHT.



OTHERS HAD MET
THE WITCH IN THE
DEAD OF NIGHT...

...AND HAD LOST THEIR
LIVES IN THE BARGAIN.



LOVEY'S EYES DARTED
BACK AND FORTH...

...SCANNING THE FLOOR
AS THE SERPENTS...



...WATER MOCCASINS BY
THE LOOK OF THEM...

...SLITHERED PAST.



SHE'S...
A WITCH!

OF COURSE SHE IS!
THAT'S WHAT ALL THE
STORIES SAY!
YOU SHOULD'VE KNOWN
THAT BEFORE YOU CAME
OUT HERE WITH ME!

I BROUGHT YOU
WITH ME BECAUSE YOU
KNOW ALL ABOUT
WITCHES!



WELL, AIN'T THAT
ABOUT THE *STUPIDEST*
THING I'VE EVER HEARD?
I DON'T KNOW ANY
MORE ABOUT WITCHES
THAN ANYONE ELSE...

...AND I'D
RATHER KEEP IT
THAT WAY!



WHAT ABOUT
MY UNCLE EARLY,
THOUGH?
IS HE ALL
RIGHT?

WHAT DID
SHE DO TO
HIM?



I CAN'T
TELL.
IT DOESN'T
LOOK TOO GOOD,
THOUGH.

HE'S NOT
MOVING.



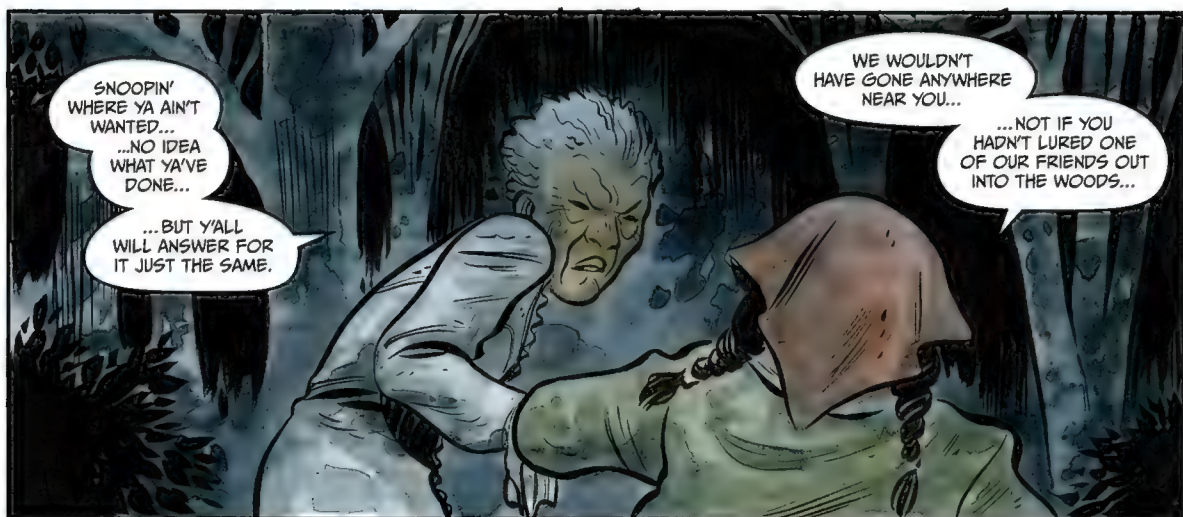
WE SHOULD GET
ON HOME, THOUGH, BEFORE
WE'RE SPOTTED.
WE CAN GET
HELP MAYBE--











SNOOPIN'
WHERE YA AIN'T
WANTED...
...NO IDEA
WHAT YA'VE
DONE...

...BUT Y'ALL
WILL ANSWER FOR
IT JUST THE SAME.

WE WOULDN'T
HAVE GONE ANYWHERE
NEAR YOU...

...NOT IF YOU
HADN'T LURED ONE
OF OUR FRIENDS OUT
INTO THE WOODS...



...YOU
DRAGGED HIM
OUT HERE...

...MURDERED
HIM...



G'ON, CHILD.
TELL ME.
TELL ME MY
BUSINESS.

TELL ME
THIS FANCY STORY
OF YOURS.



AND I'LL
TELL YOU HOW
YOU KNOW
NOTHIN'.



B-BERNICE?

WHAT ARE
YOU DOING OUT
HERE?



EARLY?
YOU'RE
ALIVE?

I SURE
HOPE I AM.

I'VE FELT BETTER...
BUT I DON'T FEEL
QUITE DEAD.



BUT WE
SAW--

DON'T
REMEMBER MUCH,
REALLY.
PICKING
BLACKBERRIES.
THEN...
WAKING UP IN
THAT CELLAR BACK
YONDER.



AND
SNAKES.
I THINK
I REMEMBER
SNAKES.



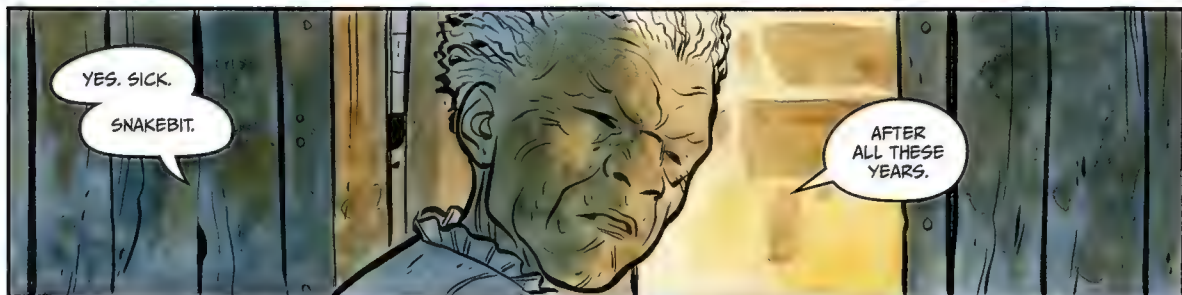
G'ON,
EARLY.
G'ON
HOME NOW.

FORGET ALL
THIS BUSINESS AND
GO HOME.



I DON'T
UNDERSTAND.

I THOUGHT
YOU KILLED HIM.
BUT YOU'RE
JUST LETTING
HIM GO.





AND NOW
YA CAN MAKE
IT RIGHT.



WHAT AM
I SUPPOSED TO
DO WITH THIS?

WHAT IS
IT YOU WANT
FROM ME?



A FEW
OF THOSE SNAKES
SLIPPED AWAY...

...GOT
FREE...

...AND I DON'T
HAVE THE STRENGTH
TO GO AFTER THEM.



I FIND
THAT HARD TO
BELIEVE.

YOU WERE
PRETTY SPYRY WHEN
YOU WERE DRAGGING ME
BACK HERE.



THOSE
SNAKES...

...REQUIRE A
WATCHFUL EYE.

I'VE BEEN
LOOKIN' AFTER
THEM...



"...FOR FAR
TOO LONG.



"USED T'BE, WEREN'T NO
NEED T'DRAG ANYONE
OUT TO MY PLACE.

"FOLKS CAME FROM
ALL AROUND...

"...TO SIP SOME HOMEMADE
DRINK...TO SING...TO DANCE.

"THOSE WERE
GOOD TIMES...



"UNTIL SHE SHOWED UP.

"SHE LOOKED LIKE SHE'D
CRAWLED UP OUT OF
THE CRICK ITSELF.



"I COULD SENSE FOULNESS
DRIPPING OFF HER...AS
SURE AS THAT WATER DRIPPED
OFF HER SKIN.

"I TRIED TO RUN HER OFF,
BUT SHE IGNORED ME.

"I DIDN'T HAVE ANY
POWER BACK THEN..."

"...BUT I RECKON SHE
SENSED THAT I MIGHT
ONE DAY BECOME
SOMETHIN' MORE
THAN I WAS.



"SHE CAME TO
DRIVE ME OFF..."

"...BEFORE I HAD
THE CHANCE TO
THREATEN HER.



"HER DARK
THOUGHTS..."

"...SLITHERED INTO THE
MINDS OF MY FRIENDS
LIKE A KNOT OF SERPENTS.



"WHEN I LOOKED UPON THEM,
IT WEREN'T MY FRIENDS THAT I SAW.

"I COULD SEE NOTHIN'
BUT MALICE IN THEIR EYES.



"THEY WERE FIXIN' TO KILL
ME, BECAUSE THAT WAS
THE WITCH'S BIDDIN'..."



"...AND THAT'S WHAT
WOULDA HAPPENED
IFN I HADN'T RUN..."



"...IF I HADN'T FOUND
A GOOD PLACE TO HIDE.

"IN ALL MY DAYS, I'D NEVER
BEEN SO SCARIT...NOT
BEFORE AND NOT SINCE...



"...AND I MIGHT NOT'VE
EVER COME OUT OF HIDING,
HAD ODESSA NOT FOUND ME.

"LIKE HESTER BECK, SHE SENSED
THE POTENTIAL FOR POWERFUL
MAGIC WITHIN ME...



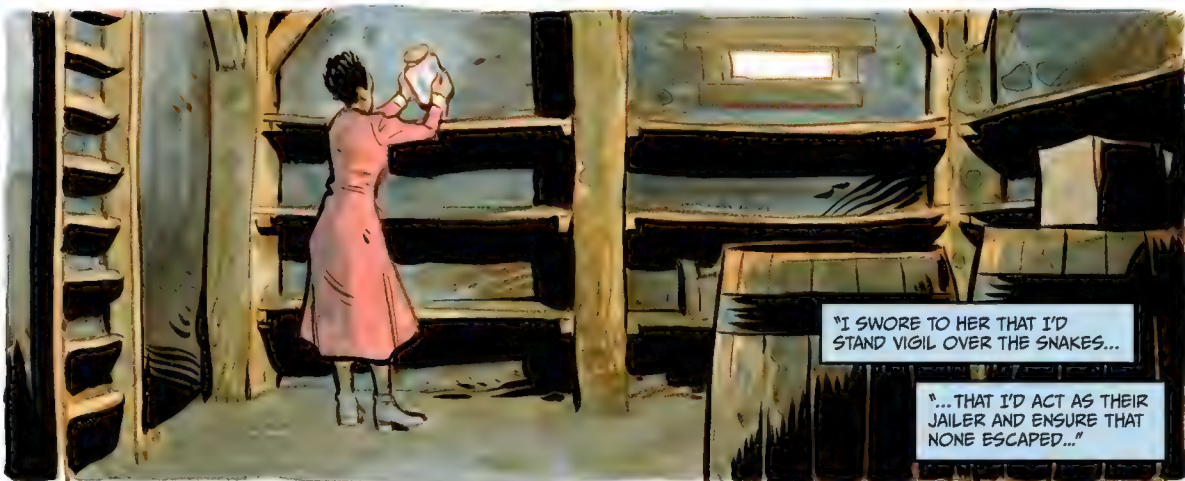
"...NOT AS POWERFUL AS
HESTER, BUT POTENT ENOUGH.

"SHE TAUGHT ME HOW TO
SPOT THE SERPENTS...
AND HOW TO COAX THEM
INTO THE OPEN...



"...HOW TO
TRAP THEM...

"...AND TO SEAL THEM
AWAY WHERE THEY
COULD HURT NO ONE.



"I SWORE TO HER THAT I'D
STAND VIGIL OVER THE SNAKES...

"...THAT I'D ACT AS THEIR
JAILER AND ENSURE THAT
NONE ESCAPED..."



...FOR AS LONG
AS I WAS ABLE.

SO...
YOU WANT ME TO
TRACK THE SNAKES THAT
SLIPPED AWAY...
...TO USE THIS
DRAGONFLY TO
FIND THEM...

...AND THEN
WHAT?



THAT MAN...EARLY...
WAS COMPELLED BY ONE
OF HESTER BECK'S
SNAKES...

...SENT HERE
TO SET THE OTHERS
LOOSE.

HE WAS NOT
THE FIRST.

IN ALL THESE
YEARS, THERE HAVE BEEN
MANY ATTEMPTS TO LOOSE
THOSE SNAKES.



TONIGHT'S THE FIRST
TIME THAT ANY OF MY
PRISONERS HAVE SLIPPED
FREE.

AND THERE'S NO TELLIN'
WHAT MIGHT HAPPEN IF'N THEY
FIND THEIR WAY INTO THE
MINDS OF PEOPLE
HEREABOUTS.



THERE'S SO
LITTLE TIME NOW.
I CAN FEEL MYSELF...
GROWIN' WEAKER...

...GETTIN'
OLD...

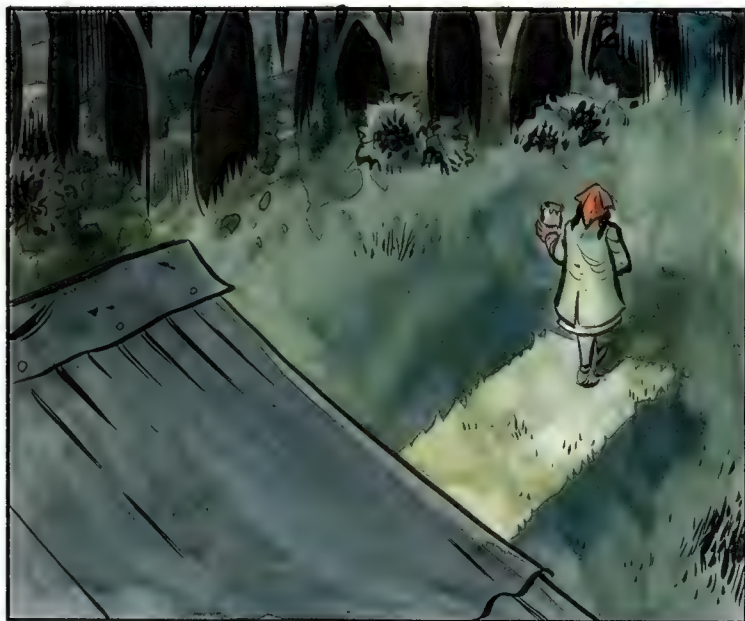
...BY THE
SECOND.



IF'N YA
DON'T FIND THEM
NOW--

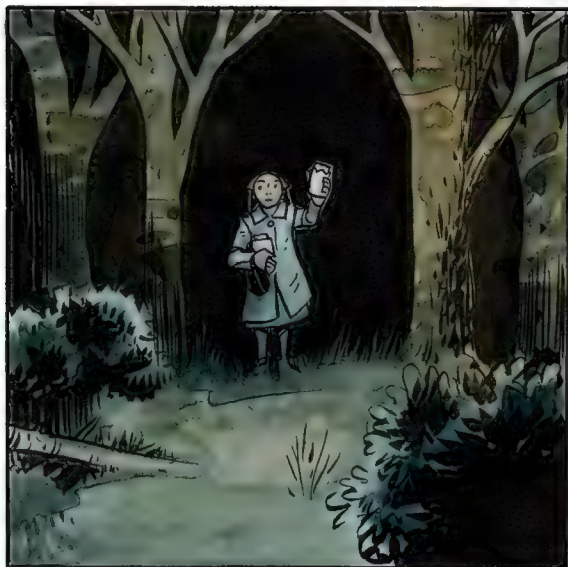


"--THERE MAY BE NAUGHT
WE CAN EVER DO."

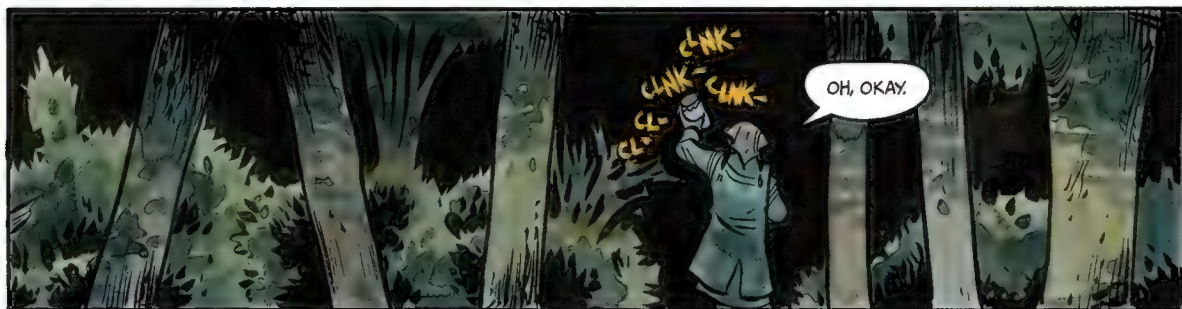
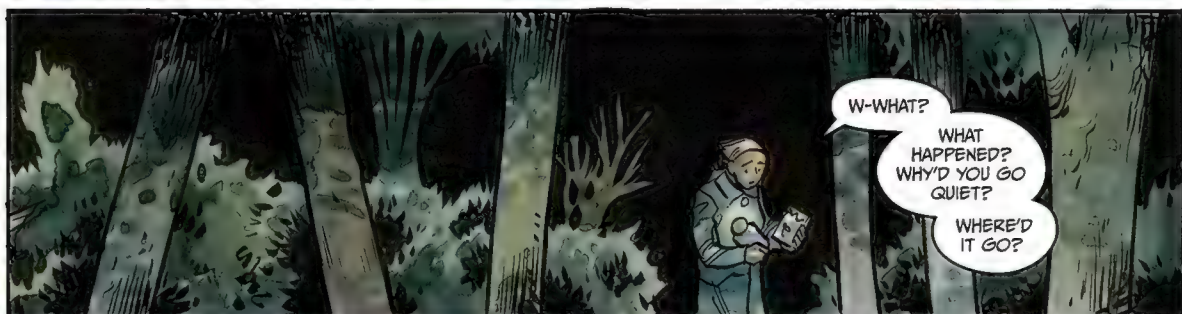
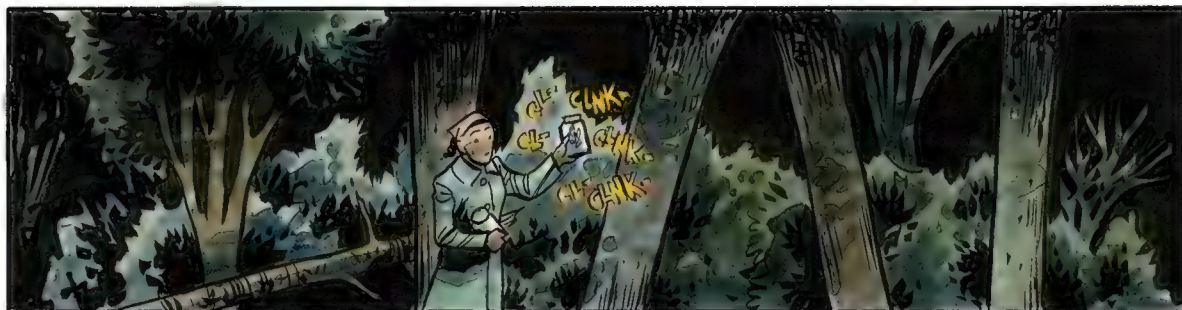
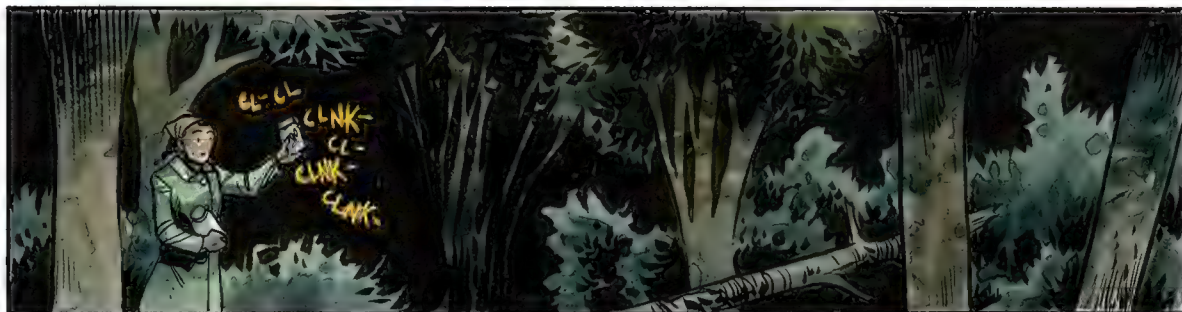


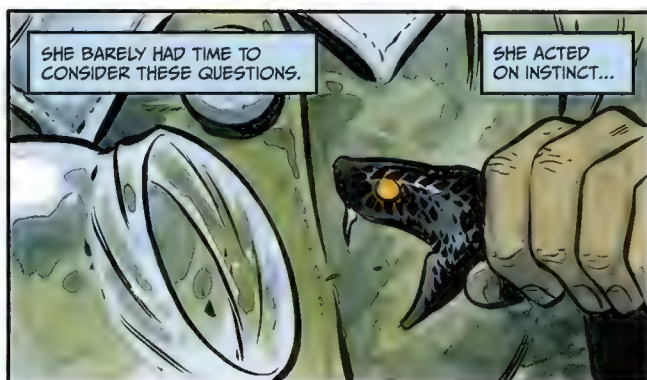
ALL RIGHT,
YOU.

SHOW ME
WHERE TO FIND
THOSE SNAKES.



PLEASE?











CO

TWELVE



IT WAS A RUMOR OF
A HAUNTED HOUSE...

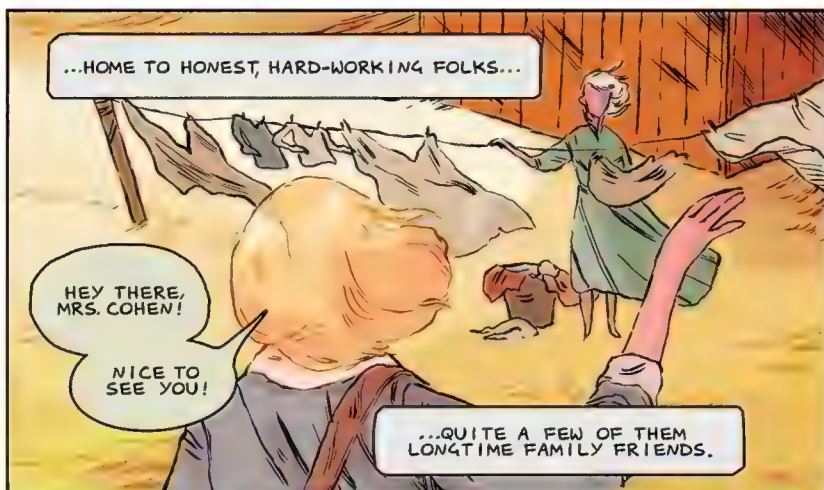
...OF CHILDREN STALKED
BY TERRIBLE FORCES...

...THAT LURED EMMY TO
CREECH'S CROSSING.



IT HAD BEEN
A WHILE SINCE
SHE'D VISITED THE
NEIGHBORHOOD BUT
SHE KNEW IT WELL
ENOUGH...

...A
COLLECTION
OF TRACT HOUSES,
ONE PRETTY MUCH
THE SAME AS
THE NEXT...



...HOME TO HONEST, HARD-WORKING FOLKS...

HEY THERE,
MRS. COHEN!

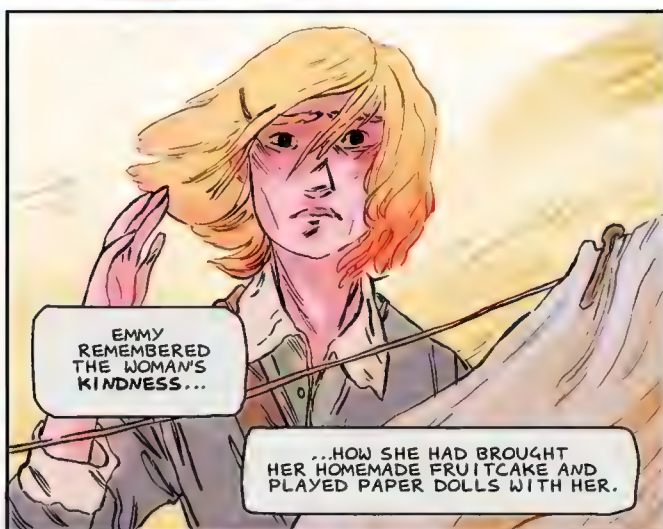
NICE TO
SEE YOU!

...QUITE A FEW OF THEM
LONGTIME FAMILY FRIENDS.



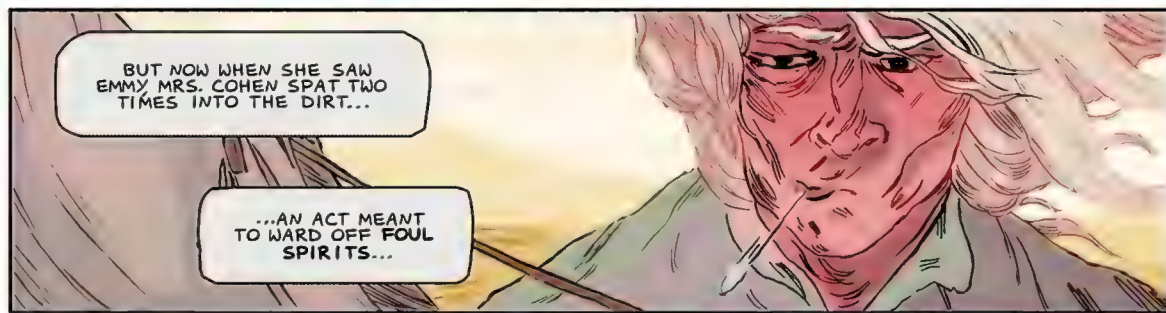
OR SO EMMY THOUGHT.

WHEN EMMY WAS LITTLE,
MRS. COHEN HAD LOOKED AFTER
HER FROM TIME TO TIME.



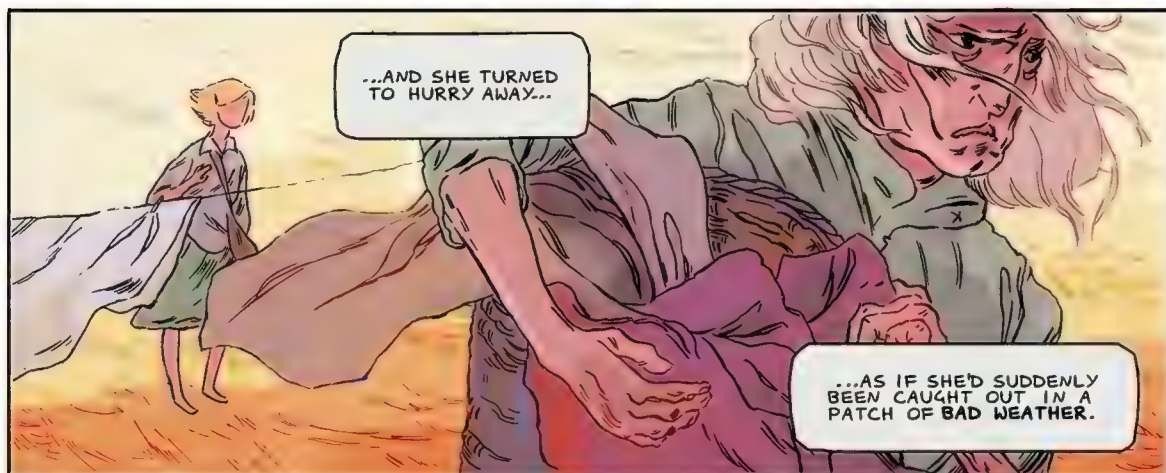
EMMY
REMEMBERED
THE WOMAN'S
KINDNESS...

...HOW SHE HAD BROUGHT
HER HOMEMADE FRUITCAKE AND
PLAYED PAPER DOLLS WITH HER.



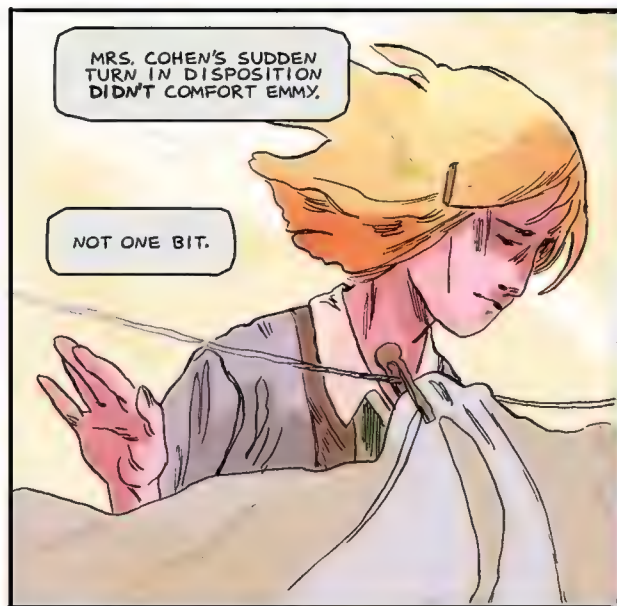
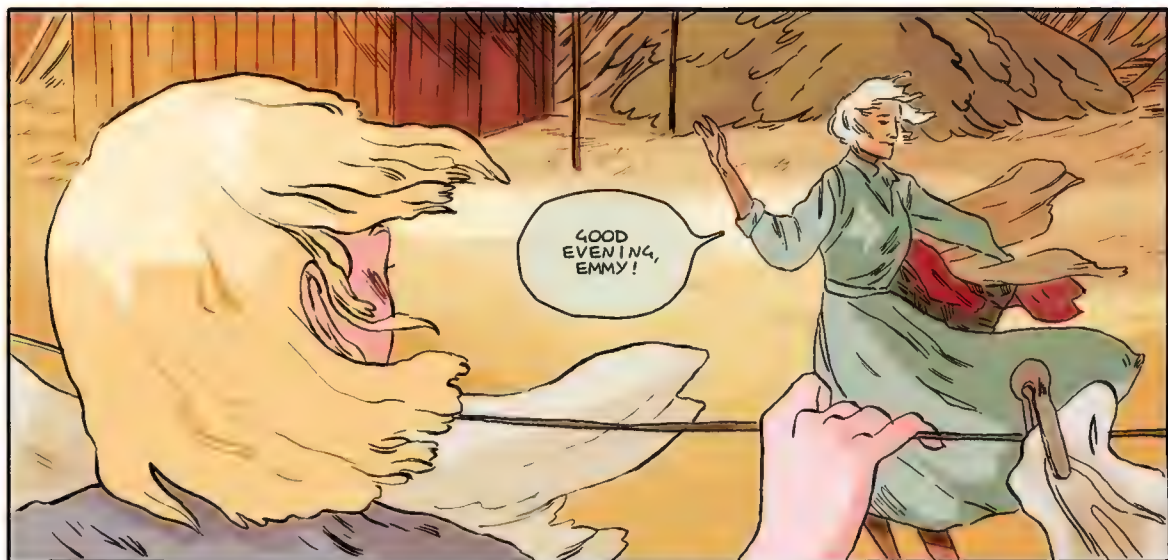
BUT NOW WHEN SHE SAW
EMMY MRS. COHEN SPAT TWO
TIMES INTO THE DIRT...

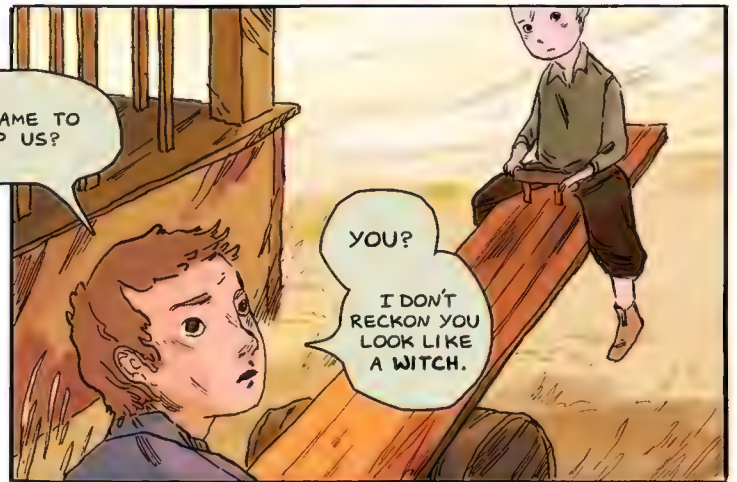
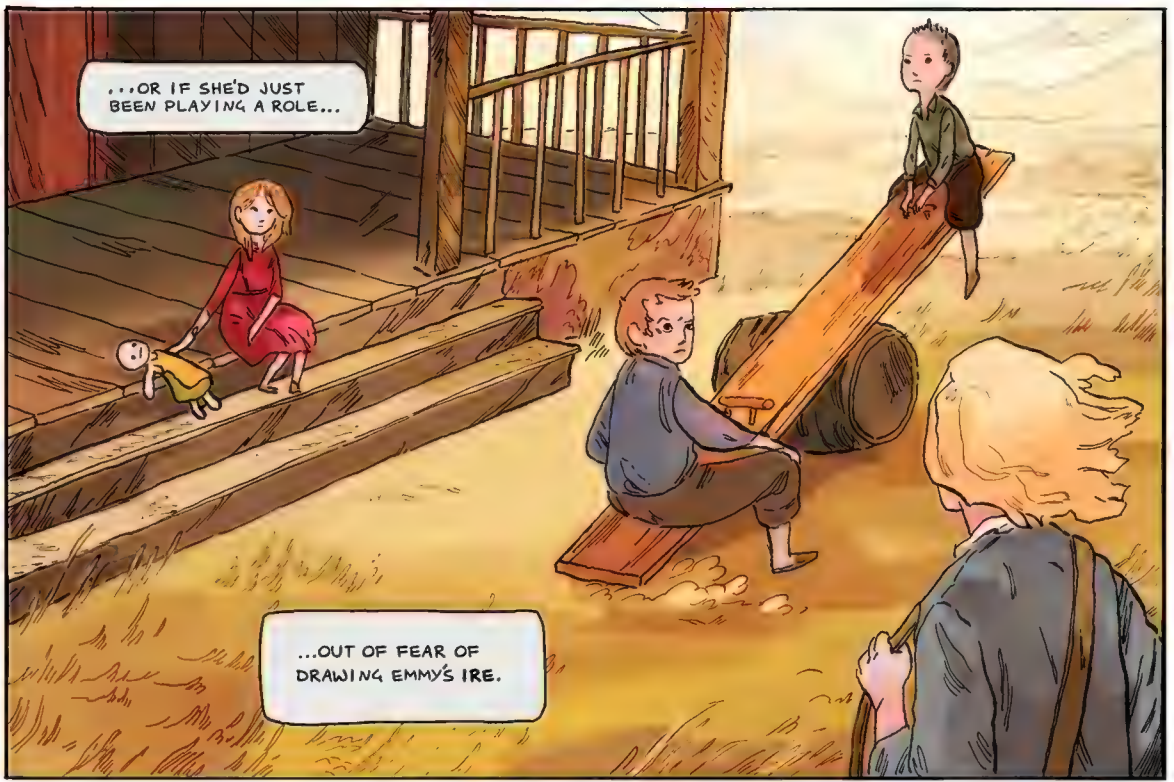
...AN ACT MEANT
TO WARD OFF FOUL
SPIRITS...

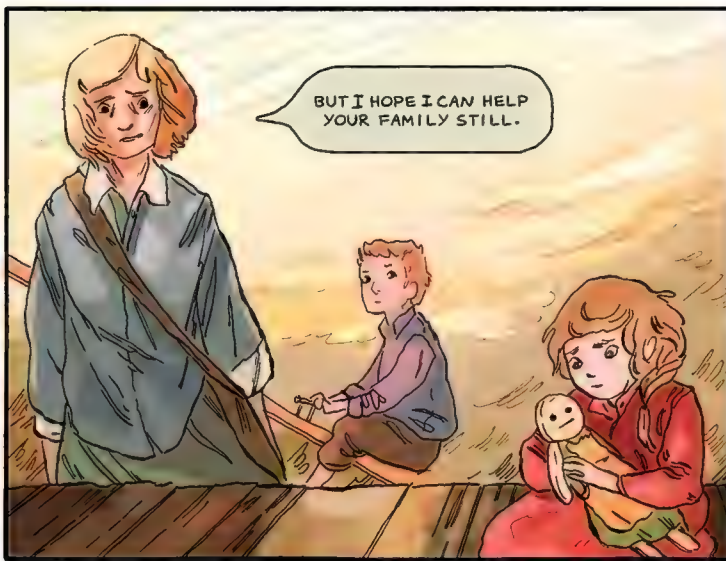


...AND SHE TURNED
TO HURRY AWAY...

...AS IF SHE'D SUDDENLY
BEEN CAUGHT OUT IN A
PATCH OF BAD WEATHER.







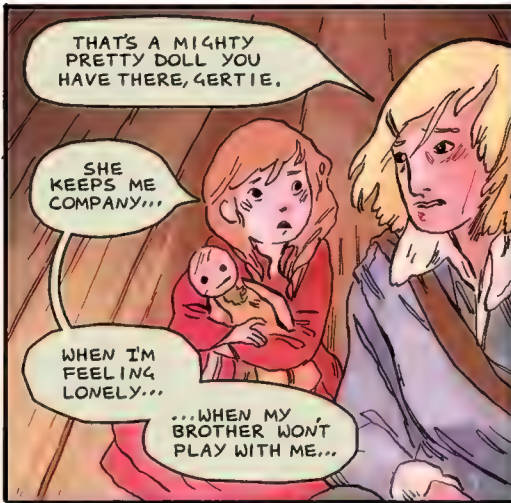
BUT I HOPE I CAN HELP
YOUR FAMILY STILL.



HI THERE, I'M EMMY.
WHAT'S YOUR NAME?

I'M GERTIE,
BUT I DON'T CARE
FOR THAT
NAME.

I DON'T LIKE
THE WAY IT
SOUNDS
NO MORE.



THAT'S A MIGHTY
PRETTY DOLL YOU
HAVE THERE, GERTIE.

SHE
KEEPS ME
COMPANY...

WHEN I'M
FEELING
LONELY...

...WHEN MY
BROTHER WON'T
PLAY WITH ME...



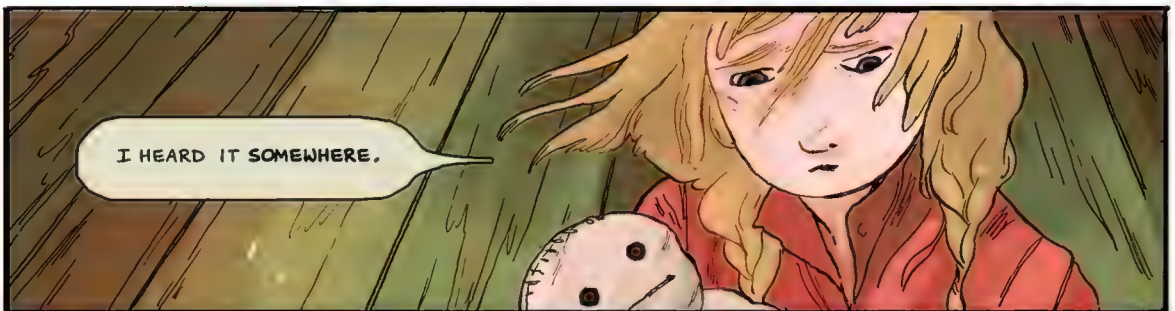
YOU'VE GOT A
FRIEND LIKE THAT
TOO, DON'T YOU?

HHHHNNNN

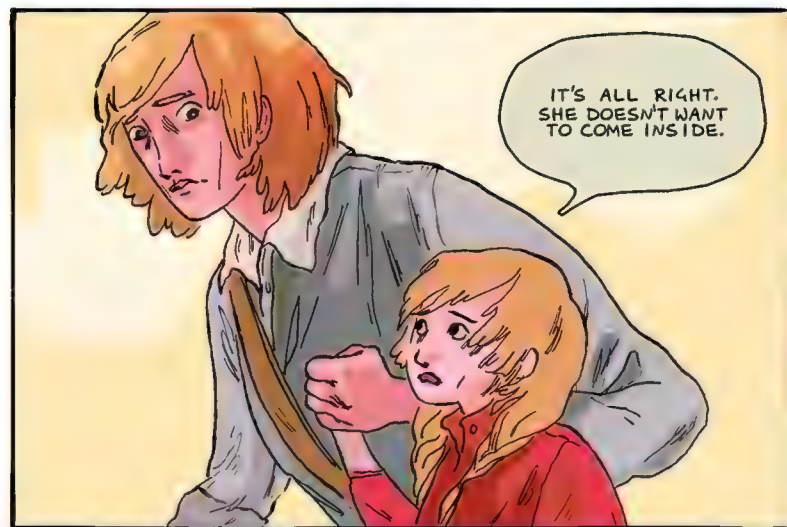
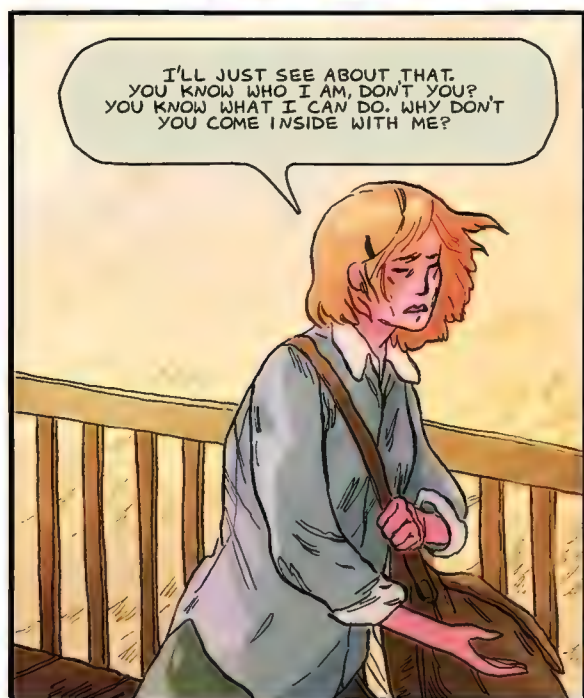
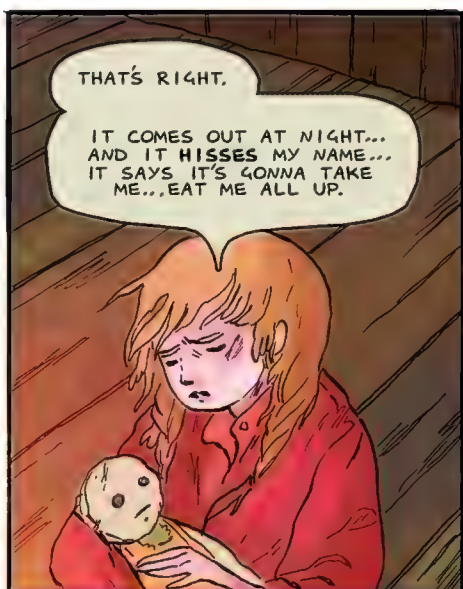


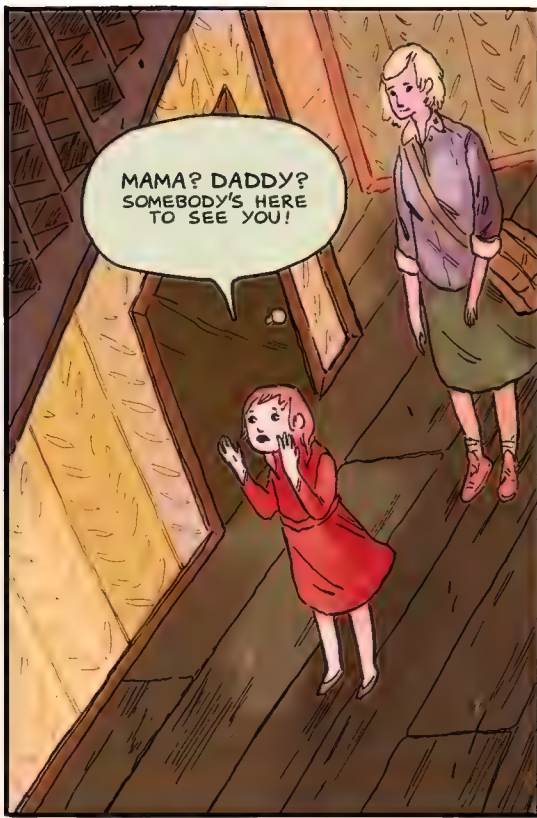
I GUESS I DO.

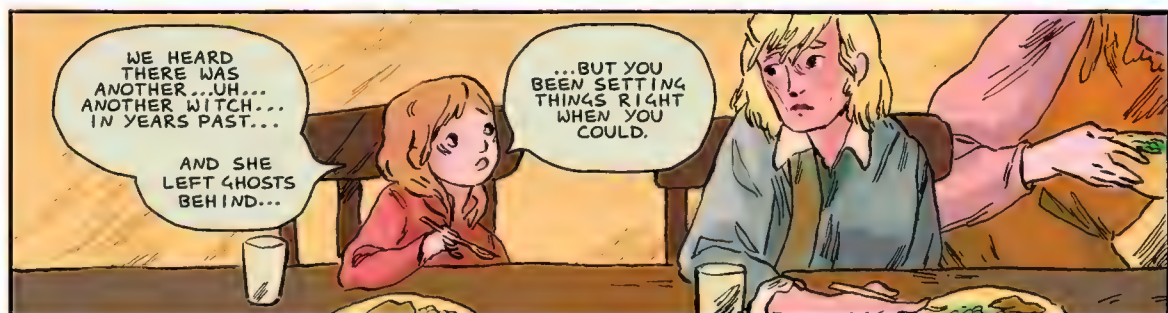
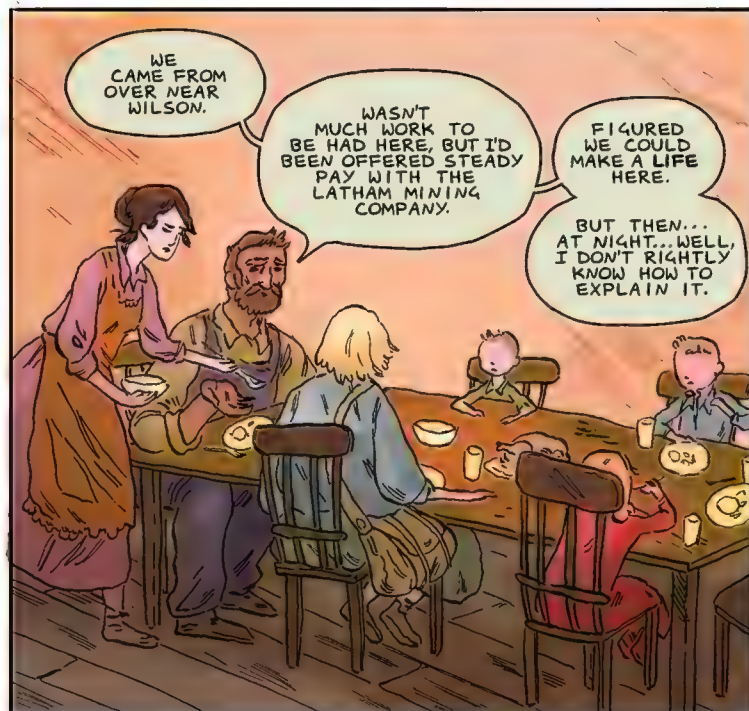
BUT HOW'D
YOU KNOW
THAT?

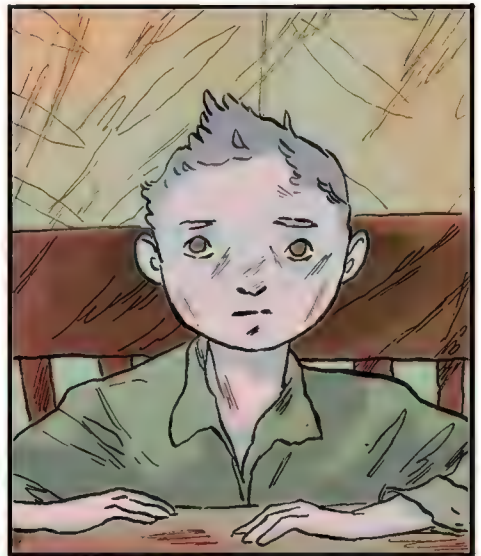
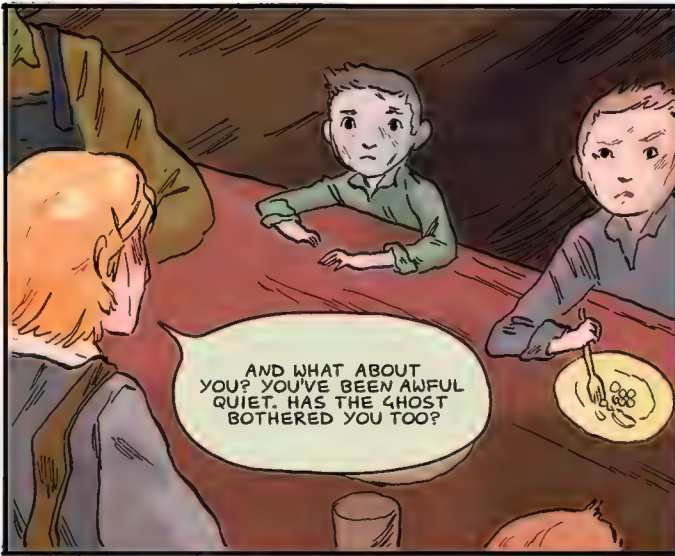


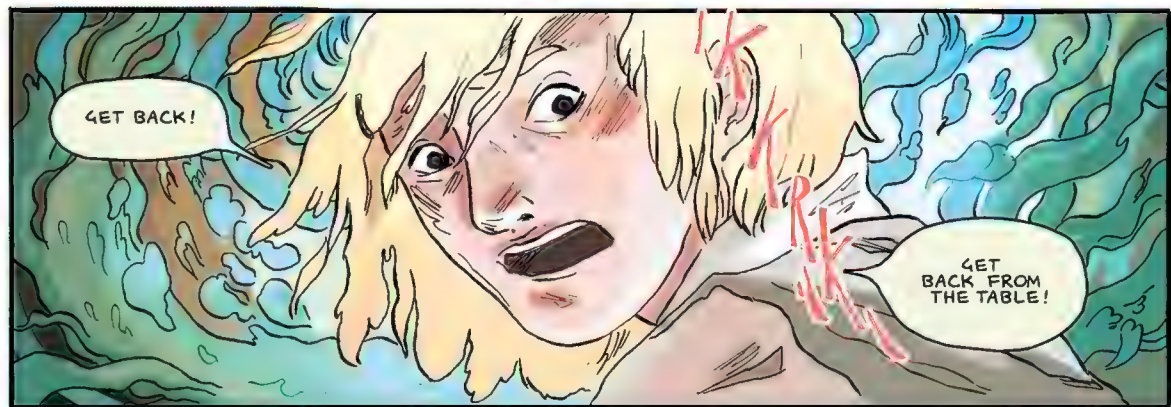
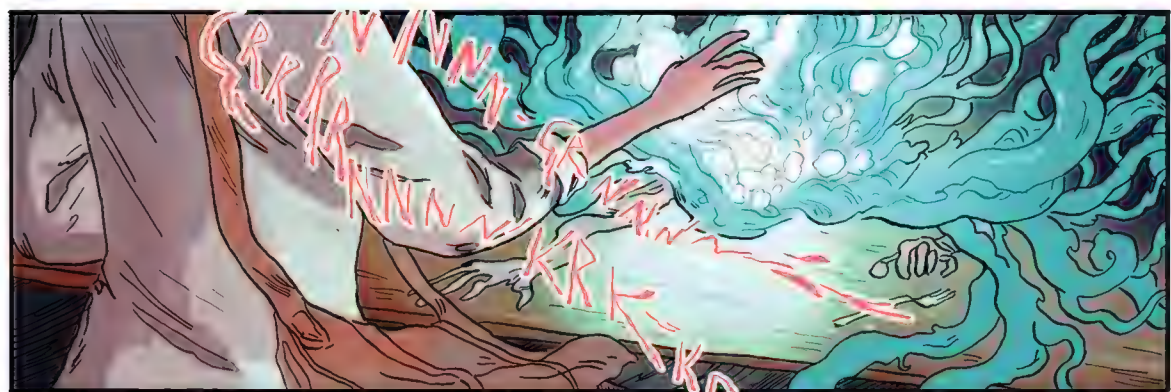
I HEARD IT SOMEWHERE.



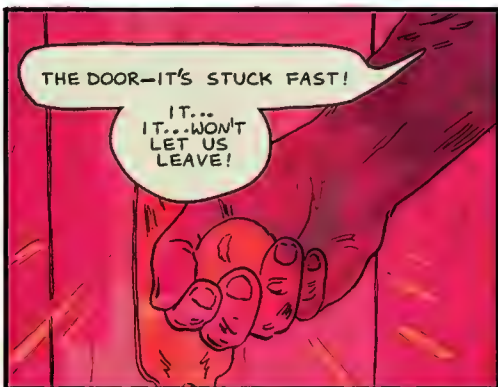


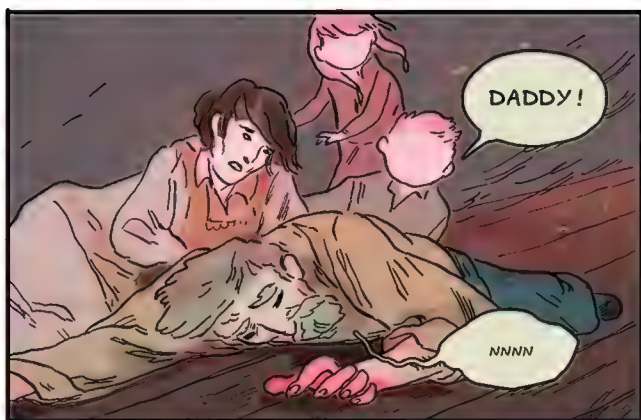


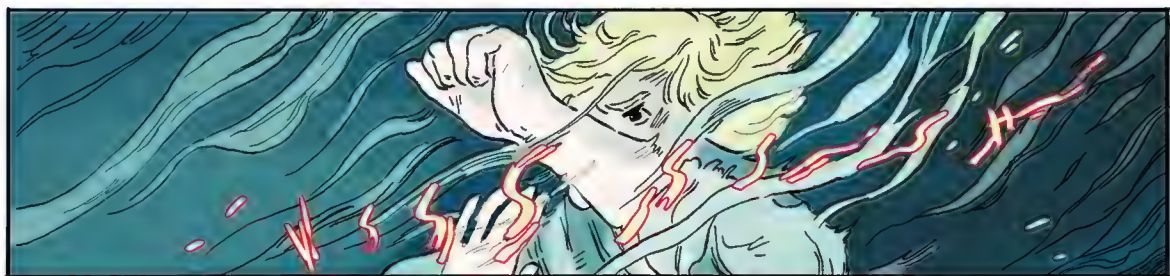








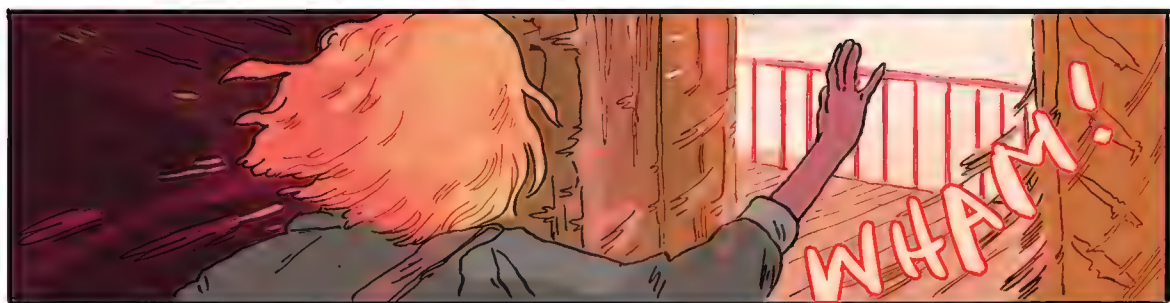
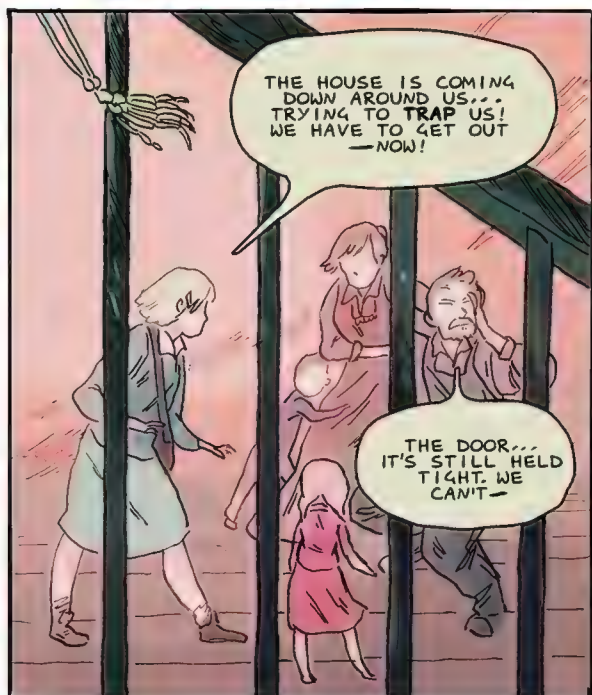


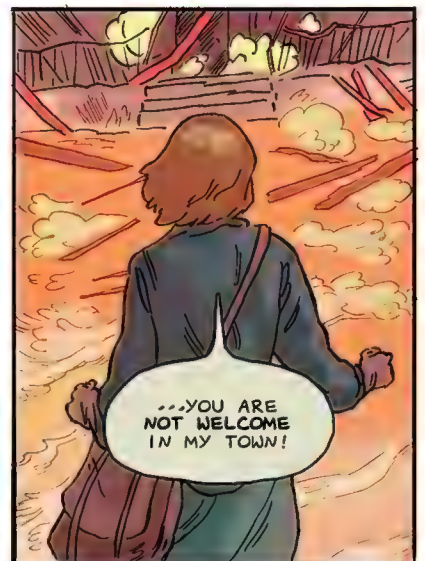
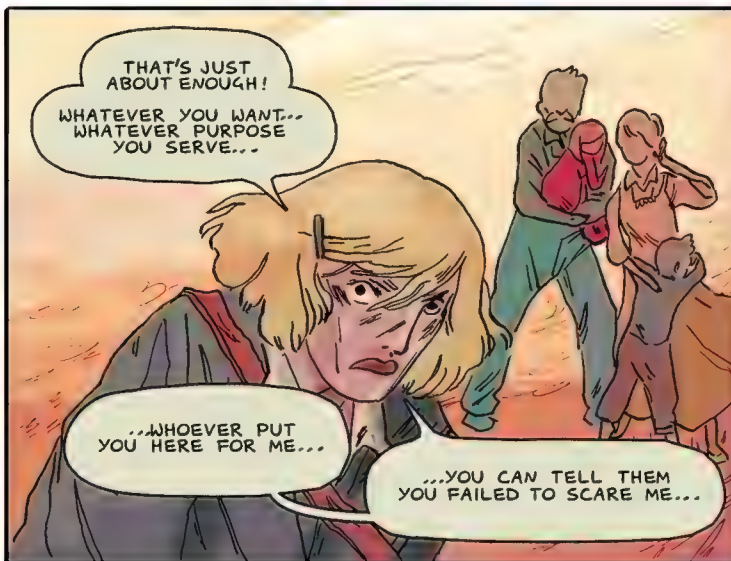














THE HOUSE REARED UP
LIKE A TWISTED SPIDER.

THE GROAN OF THE TWISTING,
CRACKING TIMBERS WAS LIKE A ROAR.

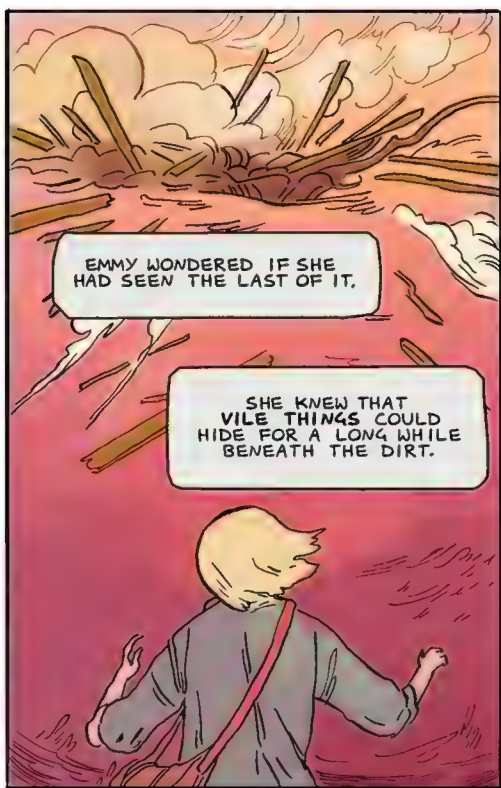
IT WAS A TRAP
SPRINGING SHUT...

...AND ANGRY THAT ITS
PREY HAD SLIPPED AWAY.



THE HOUSE SLITHERED AWAY...

...RETRACTED
UNDERGROUND
IN ITS DEFEAT.

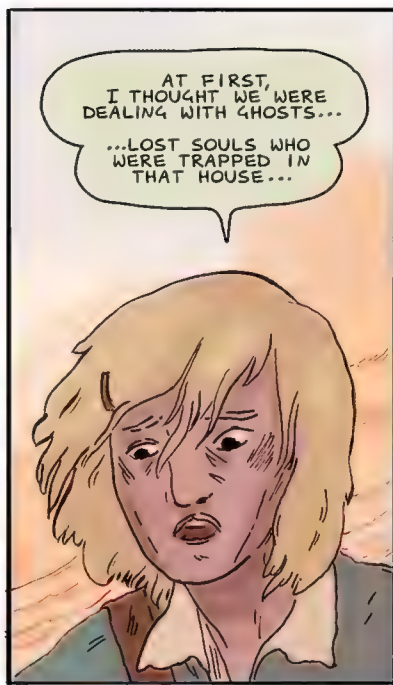


EMMY WONDERED IF SHE
HAD SEEN THE LAST OF IT.

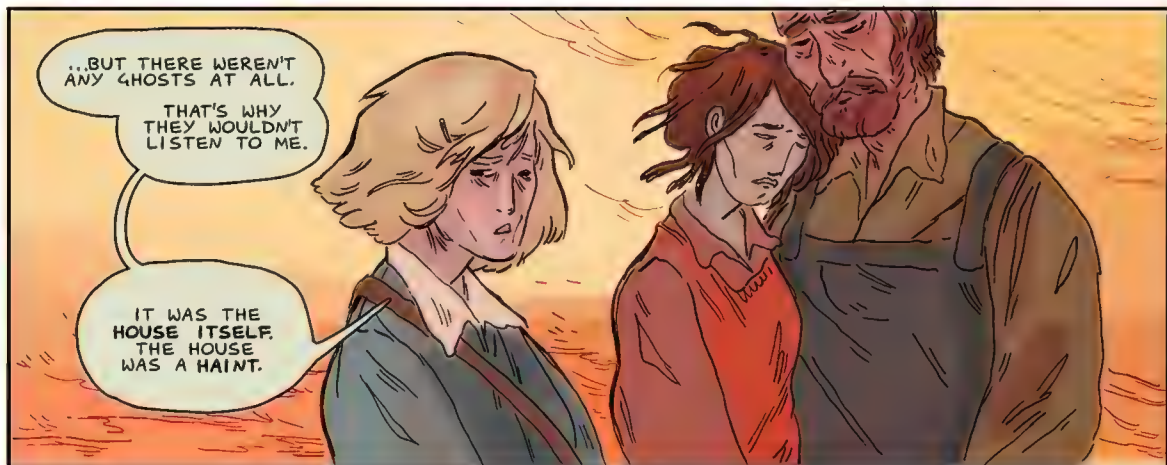
SHE KNEW THAT
VILE THINGS COULD
HIDE FOR A LONG WHILE
BENEATH THE DIRT.



WHAT...WHAT WAS THAT?
NOTHING LIKE THAT'S EVER
HAPPENED BEFORE.



AT FIRST,
I THOUGHT WE WERE
DEALING WITH GHOSTS...
...LOST SOULS WHO
WERE TRAPPED IN
THAT HOUSE...



...BUT THERE WEREN'T
ANY GHOSTS AT ALL.

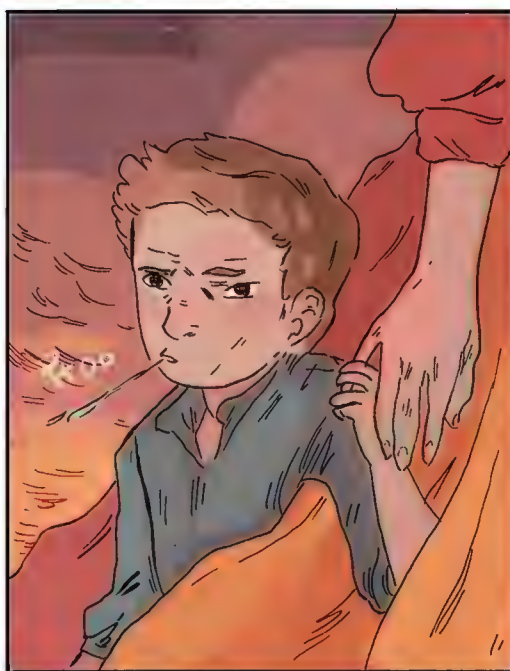
THAT'S WHY
THEY WOULDN'T
LISTEN TO ME.

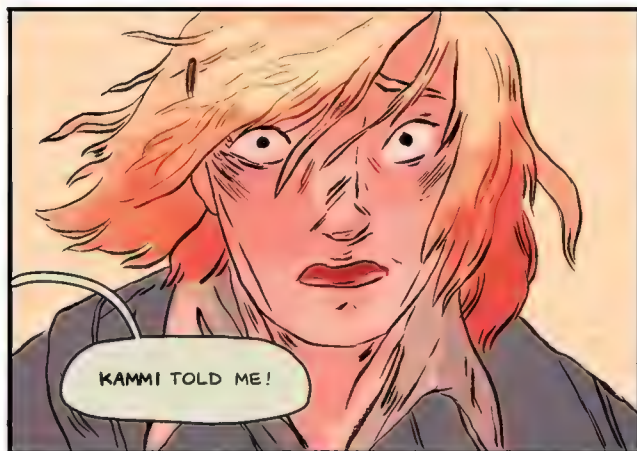
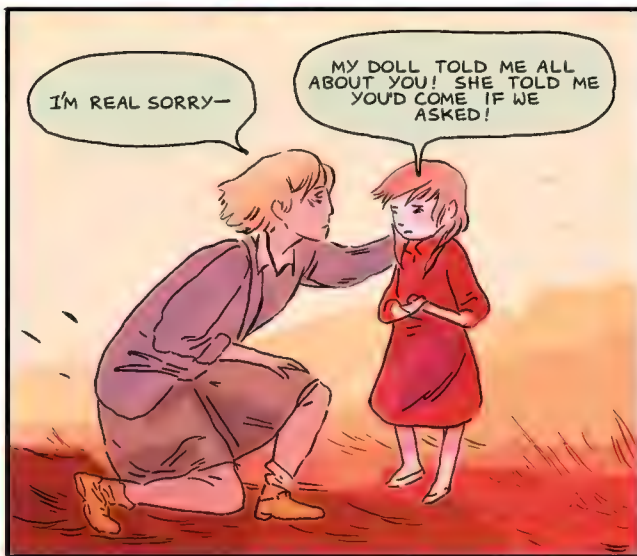
IT WAS THE
HOUSE ITSELF.
THE HOUSE
WAS A HAUNT.



AND I THINK
MAYBE...

...IT WAS HERE
FOR ME ALL
ALONG.







THIRTEEN

SOME MIGHT SAY HARROW COUNTY
WAS FOUNDED ON UNWHOLESOME EARTH...



...THAT THE SOIL ITSELF
HAD SPOILED LONG AGO...



...LONG BEFORE ANY NATURAL CREATURE
HAD EVER SET FOOT THEREABOUTS.



H-HELLO?



HELLO?
IS SOMEBODY
OUT THERE?



WHO'S
OUT THERE
A-WHISTLING?
WHAT DO
YOU WANT?
YOU ALL
RIGHT OUT
THERE?



IT WAS THIS
UNDERSTANDING...

...THAT THE DIRT BENEATH
YOUR FEET WAS TAINTED...





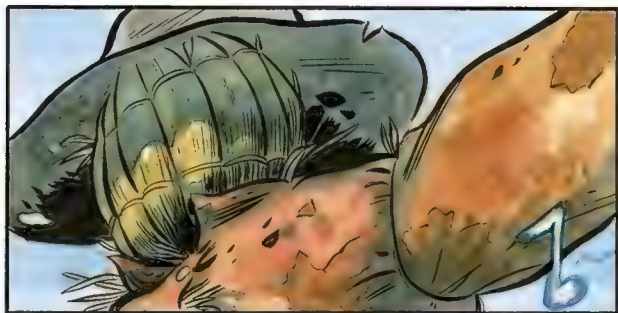
...THAT CAUSED FOLKS
TO STEP A LITTLE
MORE CAREFULLY...



...TO GLANCE OVER THEIR
SHOULDERS, CERTAIN
SOMEONE--OR SOMETHING--
WAS FOLLOWING THEM...



...AND TO WATCH
THE SHADOWS WITH
MOUNTING DREAD.



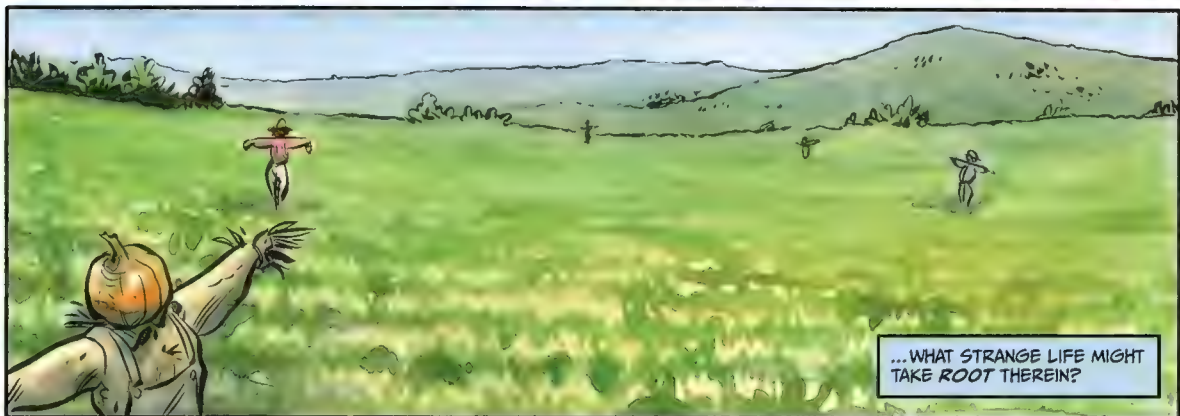
WHOEVER
YOU ARE...

...WHOEVER'S
OUT THERE...

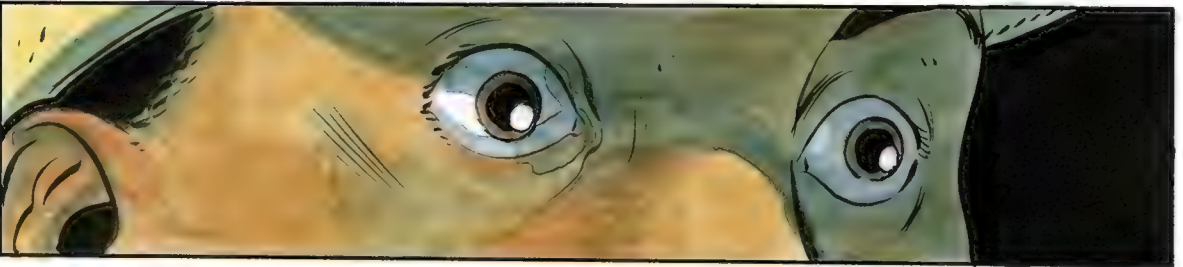
...I'M
SORRY, BUT I
CAN'T STAY.

I'M
EXPECTED
BACK--

FOR IF THE VERY EARTH HAD BEEN
POISONED BY ABNORMAL THINGS...

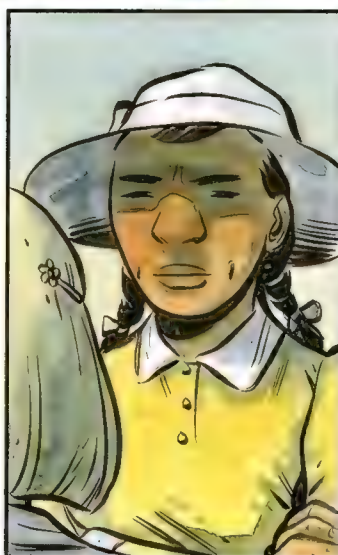


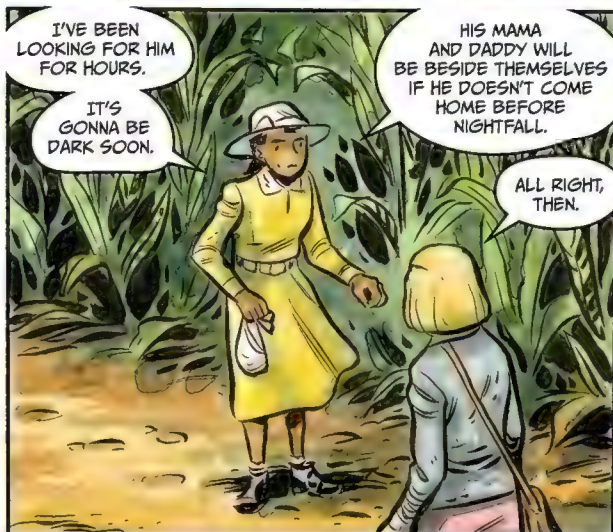
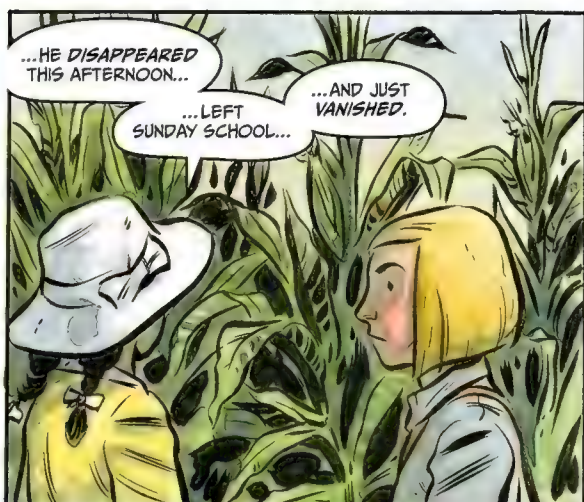
...WHAT STRANGE LIFE MIGHT
TAKE ROOT THEREIN?







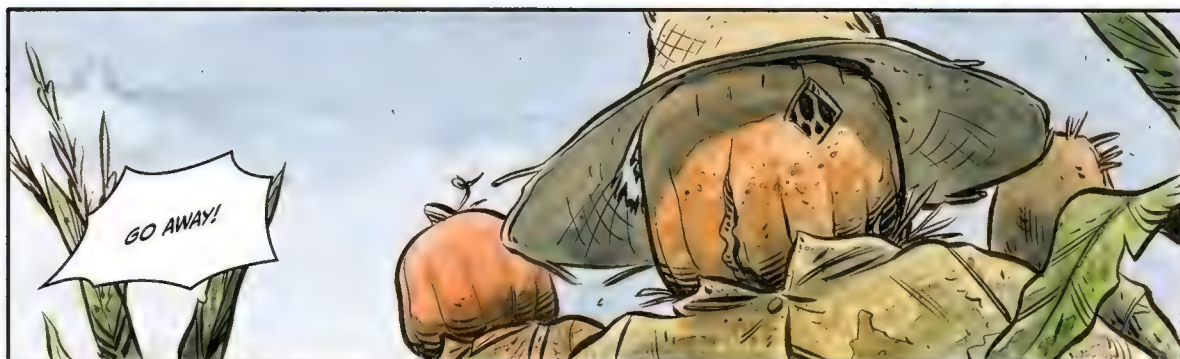








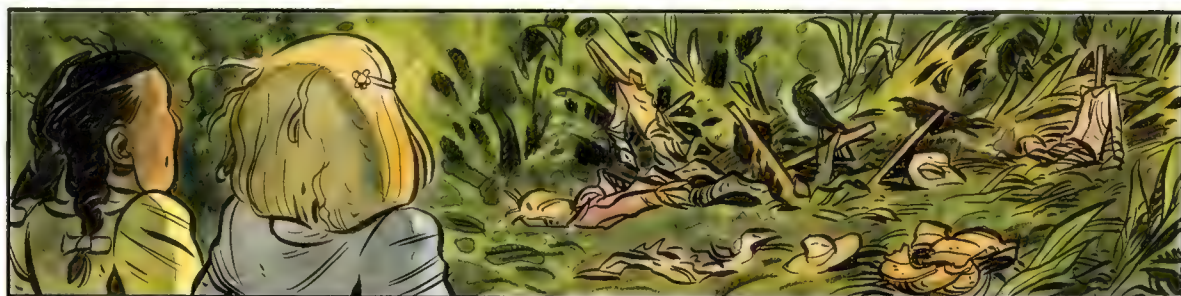














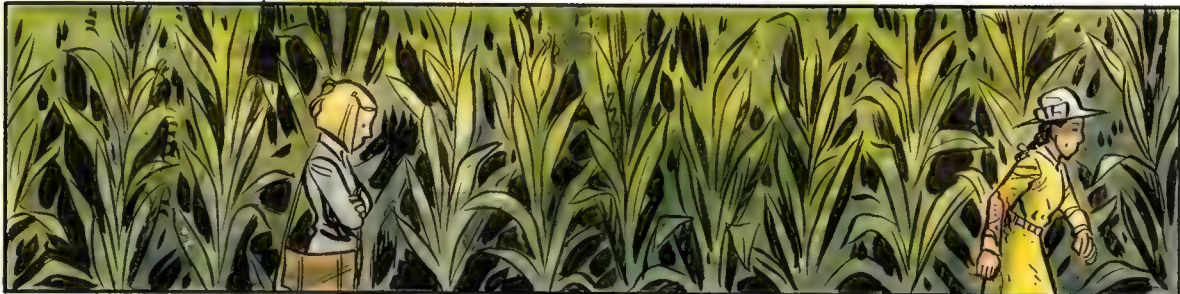




...EVEN MORE
THAN THAT POWER
OF YOURS.



YOU'RE...
...AFRAID
OF ME?



SOMEBODY'S
MOVING OUT
THERE!

DO YOU
HEAR?



YOU THINK
MAYBE IT'S THE
SKINLESS BOY?

I DON'T
THINK SO.
HE'S BEHIND US.

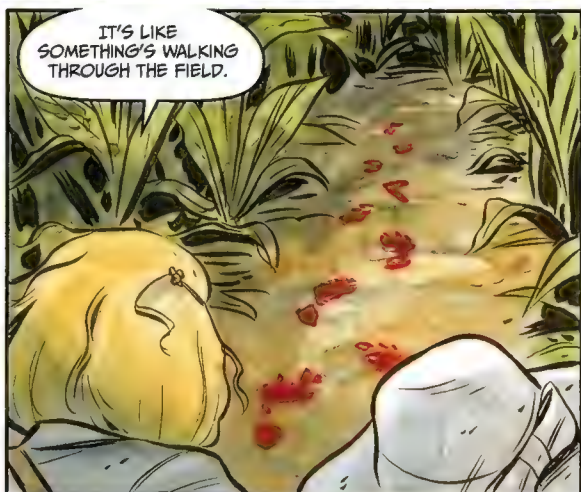
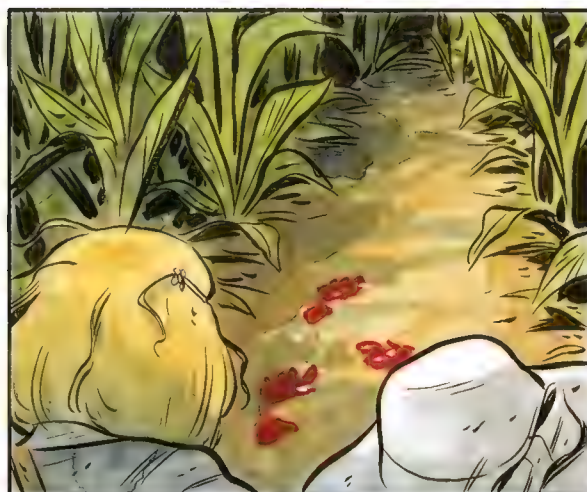
THAT SOUND'S
COMING FROM UP
AHEAD...LEADING
US DEEPER.



I SEE
MOVEMENT!

SOMEONE
PUSHING THROUGH
THE STALKS!

BUT
WHO--





AFTER ALL,
GIRL...

... WE'RE
FAMILY.



FOURTEEN

EMMY DIDN'T RIGHTLY
REMEMBER HER MOTHER...

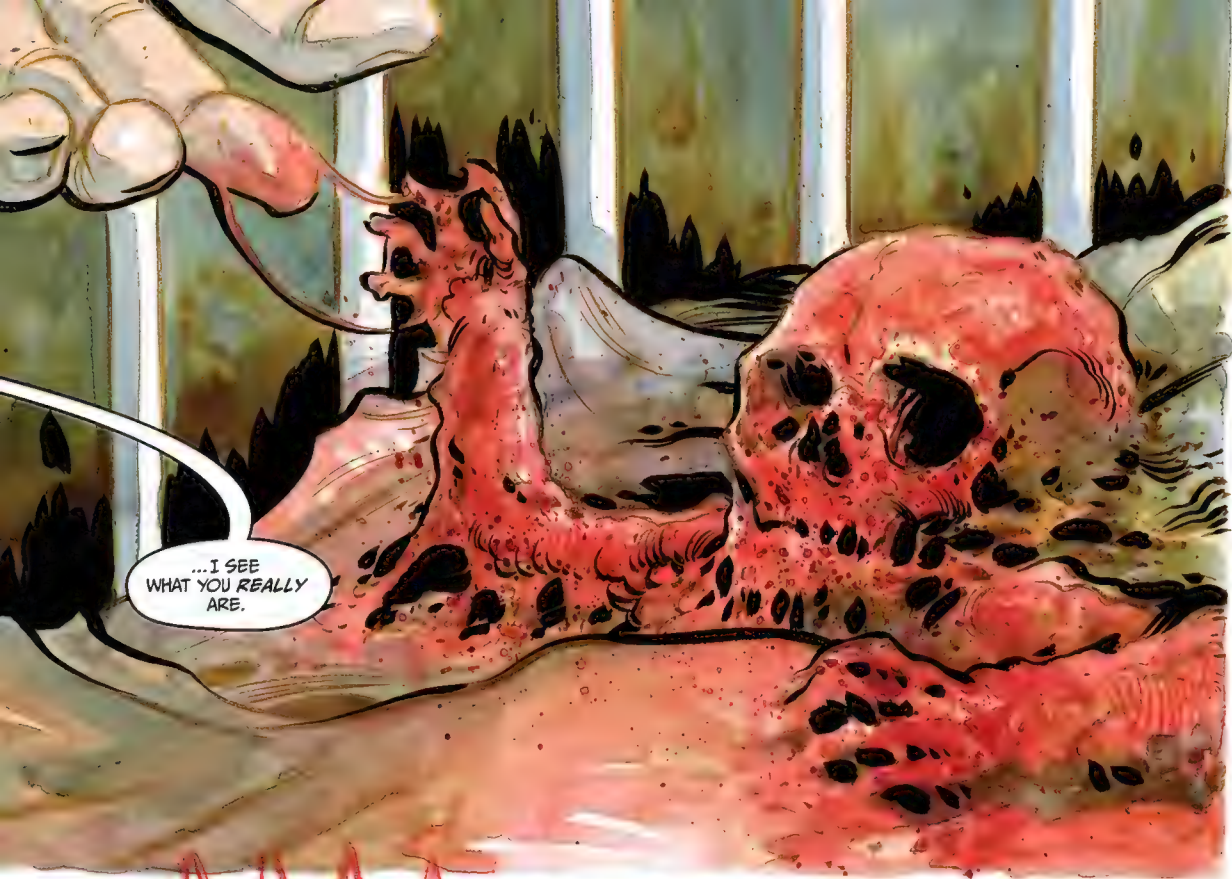
...OR THE NIGHT
SHE LEFT HOME.

I...
...I JUST...
...CAN'T.











YOU LOOK AFTER HER, ISAAC.

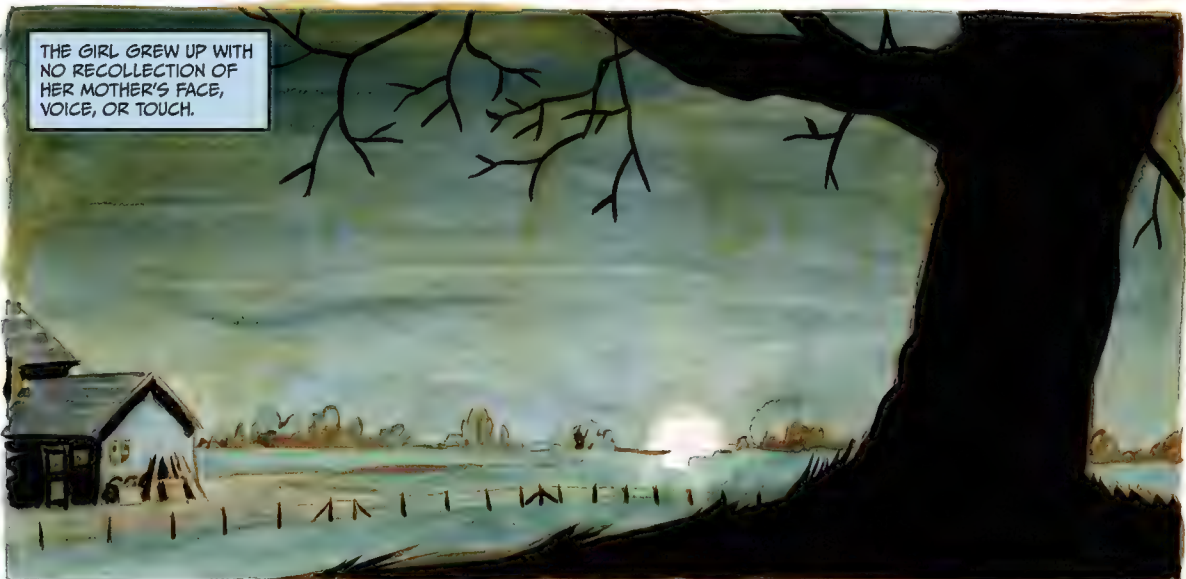
YOU PROTECT OUR GIRL.
LORD KNOWS SHE'LL NEED IT... AND THAT'S WHAT WE'RE SUPPOSED TO DO.



EVEN IF THAT MEANS...
...PROTECTING HER FROM OURSELVES.



ONE NIGHT, WHEN EMMY WAS JUST AN INFANT IN THE CRIB...
...HER MOTHER VANISHED INTO THE DARK.



THE GIRL GREW UP WITH NO RECOLLECTION OF HER MOTHER'S FACE, VOICE, OR TOUCH.



SOMETIMES, EMMY WONDERED IF SHE'D EVER SEE HER MOTHER AGAIN...

...IF SHE'D EVER COME WANDERING BACK INTO HARROW...



...AND IF SHE'D EVER KNOW WHAT IT FELT LIKE TO HAVE A REAL FAMILY.

COME ON, NOW.

STEP A LITTLE CLOSER.

LET ME HAVE A GOOD LOOK AT YOU.



MISTER, I DON'T KNOW YOU.

AND YOU MIGHT SAY WE'RE RELATED...



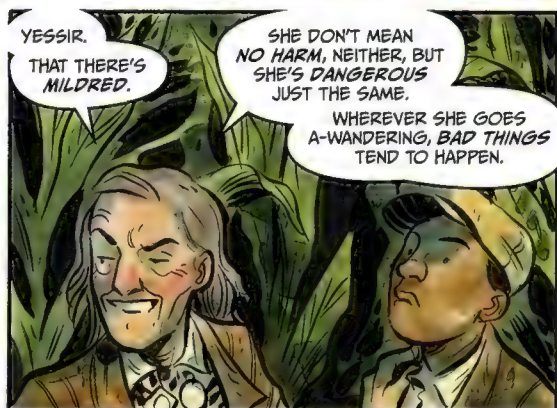
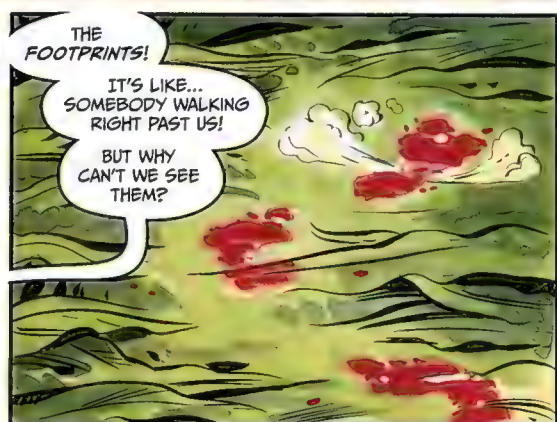
...BUT YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND A THING ABOUT ME AT ALL IF YOU THINK I'M JUST GONNA LET YOU THREATEN MY FRIENDS.



THREATEN?

I'M 'FRAID, GIRL, YOU'VE FIGURED ME ALL WRONG.

I'M JUST KEEPING THIS CHILD CLOSE...







I MOST ASSUREDLY
WOULDN'T WANT TO
CROSS THE PAIR
OF YOU.



ARE YOU
ALL RIGHT,
CLINTON?

I...
I
THINK
SO.



BERNICE--TAKE CLINTON
AND HEAD HOME. I'M SURE
HIS FOLKS ARE WORRIED
ABOUT HIM.

WHAT
ABOUT
YOU?

I'M
GONNA STAY
HERE.

I DON'T THINK
THIS FELLA--WHOEVER
HE IS--IS GONNA TRY
TO HURT ME.



I WOULDN'T
DREAM
OF IT.

AND I COULDN'T
SO MUCH AS PLUCK A
HAIR FROM YOUR HEAD,
EVEN IF I WANTED
TO DO SO.



I EXPECT MY
FRIENDS TO
BE OFFERED
THE SAME
COURTESY.

COURTESY'S
GOT NOTHING TO
DO WITH IT,
GIRL.

TRADITION,
THOUGH...NOW THAT'S
GOT SOME WEIGHT
TO IT.
STILL, YOUR
FRIENDS WILL HAVE SAFE
PASSAGE AS FAR AS
I'M CONCERNED.



AND I'M
SURE WE CAN CONVINCE
MILDRED TO STAY
WHERE SHE IS...

...AT LEAST
FOR A LITTLE
WHILE.





YOU'RE NOT
THE TRUSTING
SORT, ARE
YOU?

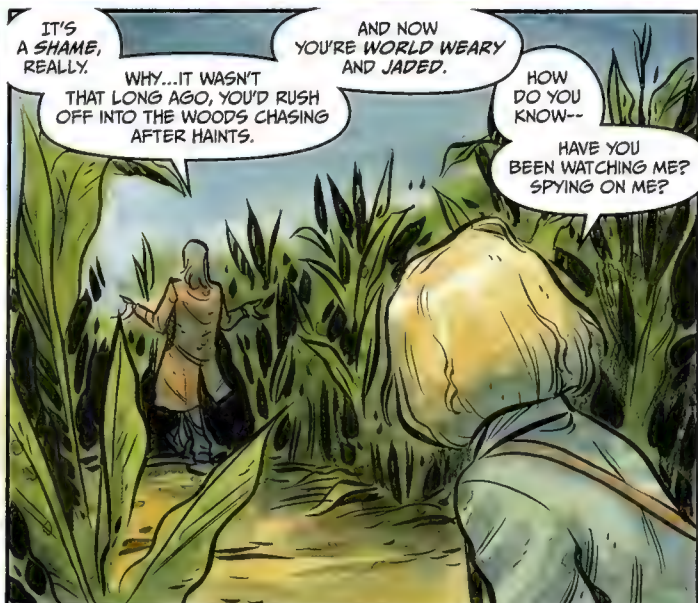
JUST YET YOU
HAVEN'T GIVEN ME
CAUSE TO TRUST
YOU.



COME
ALONG NOW,
EMMY.

THERE'S A
GOOD DEAL MORE
YOU NEED TO
LEARN.

AND OH SO MUCH
TO SHOW YOU.



IT'S
A SHAME,
REALLY.

WHY...IT WASN'T
THAT LONG AGO, YOU'D RUSH
OFF INTO THE WOODS CHASING
AFTER HAINTS.

AND NOW
YOU'RE WORLD WEARY
AND JADED.

HOW
DO YOU
KNOW--

HAVE YOU
BEEN WATCHING ME?
SPYING ON ME?



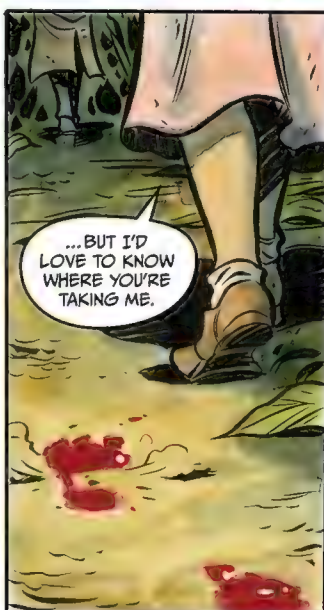
NOT AT
ALL, NOT
AT ALL.

BUT I'M
A PSYCHOPOMP,
IF N YOU KNOW WHAT
THAT MEANS...

...TASKED WITH
LEADING THE DEAD TO
THE AFTERLIFE...AND THE
LIVING FROM ONE
STAGE OF LIFE TO
THE NEXT.

EVEN IF N WE
DIDN'T SHARE THE SAME
BLOOD, I WOULD'VE
SENSED WHAT WAS
HAPPENING TO
YOU.

I DON'T
RIGHTLY UNDERSTAND
EVEN HALF OF WHAT
YOU'RE SAYING...



...BUT I'D
LOVE TO KNOW
WHERE YOU'RE
TAKING ME.



WHY, TO WHAT
COMES NEXT,
OF COURSE.





I...I DON'T MUCH CARE FOR MAGIC HOUSES.

LAST ONE I SET FOOT IN...

...TRIED TO EAT ME.



THAT'S NOT GONNA HAPPEN HERE.

WE'RE HERE TO HELP, CHILD.

COME WITH ME AND YOU'LL SEE FOR YOURSELF.



BESIDES... I RECKON YOU CAN TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF...

...LEASTWAYS WHERE FLESH-EATING HOUSES ARE CONCERNED.

BUT I IMAGINE YOU CAN FEEL IT, DEEP DOWN IN YOUR BONES.



YOU HAVE NOTHING TO FEAR HERE.



EMMY HAD NEVER SET FOOT IN THAT HOUSE BEFORE THAT MOMENT...

...AND YET IT SOMEHOW FELT FAMILIAR...



...SAFE...



...AS IF SHE WAS BEING
WATCHED OVER...

...AND PROTECTED.



AT ONE TIME, SHE HAD
FELT THE SAME IN THE
COMPANY OF HER PA.

THAT SENSE OF SAFETY
HAD *WEAKENED* SOME
IN RECENT MONTHS...

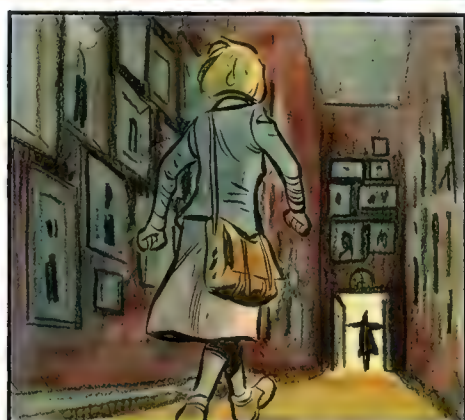


...ONLY JUST NOW STARTING TO STITCH
ITSELF BACK TOGETHER AFTER RECENT
UNPLEASANTNESS.

STILL, SHE
RECOGNIZED
THE FEELING.



IT WAS THE
FEELING OF
KINSHIP.





EMMY--
ALLOW ME TO
INTRODUCE YOUR
KIN.



THIS IS
WILLA.



MILDRED,
YOU'VE ALREADY
MET.



THAT FELLA
THERE'S KAINE.



CORBIN'S
SULKING OVER
YONDER.

CAN WE
JUST GET ON
WITH IT?



AND
THAT THERE'S
ODESSA.



H-HELLO.
MY NAME
IS EMMY.
HOW DO
YOU DO?



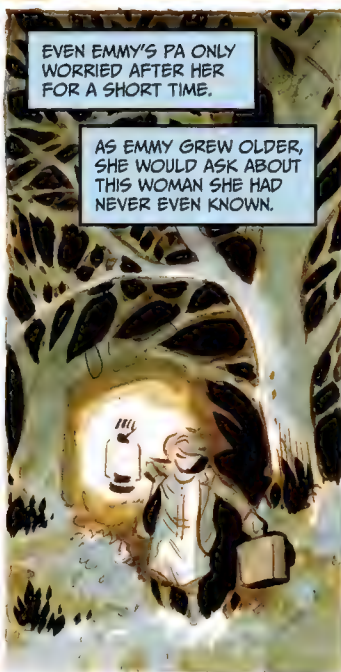


"...BECAUSE YOU'RE
ONE OF US."



ONE NIGHT, NEARLY EIGHTEEN
YEARS AGO, EMMY'S MOTHER
DISAPPEARED.

NO ONE KNEW WHERE
SHE RAN OFF TO.



EVEN EMMY'S PA ONLY
WORRIED AFTER HER
FOR A SHORT TIME.

AS EMMY GREW OLDER,
SHE WOULD ASK ABOUT
THIS WOMAN SHE HAD
NEVER EVEN KNOWN.



"I WISH I KNEW WHAT TO
TELL YOU," PA WOULD TELL HER.

"I TRIED TO FIND
HER FOR A TIME.



"BUT IT WAS HARD TO KEEP
AT IT, NO MATTER HOW MUCH
SHE MEANT TO ME.

"I HAD A BABY GIRL TO
LOOK AFTER AND ALL."



NO, NO,
NO.


NOW THIS'LL
NEVER DO.









A woman with dark hair, wearing a white dress, is bent over a stream, washing her face. The stream flows from the bottom left towards the right. The background is a dense forest with tall trees and lush green foliage. The scene is depicted in a painterly style with soft lighting.

"IT WAS HESTER WHO
BROKE THE LAW..."

"...WHO BROKE FROM
OUR TRADITIONS..."

"...WHEN SHE TOOK IT UPON
HERSELF TO BECOME A GOD."



"SHE WAS ALWAYS MAKING TROUBLE, THOUGH.

"THAT'S WHY WE CAST HER OUT IN THE FIRST PLACE.



"THAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN WHERE WE WENT WRONG...

"...IN DISTANCING OURSELVES FROM OUR KIN.



"HESTER NEVER DID LIKE BEING ALONE...

"...AND IN LONELINESS, HER THOUGHTS TURNED TO MISCHIEF.



"SHE CALLED FORTH OTHERS TO KEEP HER COMPANY...

"...SHAPED THEM OUT OF THE MUD...



"...AND HER BLOOD.



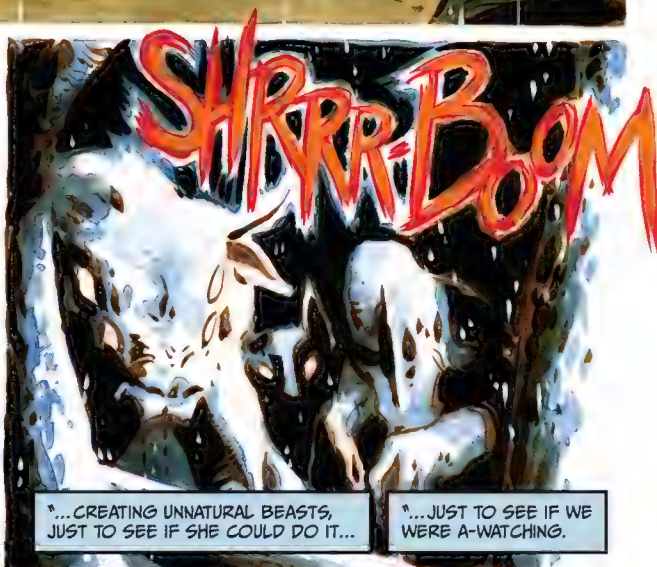
"HER BLOOD...

"...AND OURS.



"OH, HOW SHE TESTED US...

"...EVEN IN THE EARLY
DAYS OF HER EXILE..."



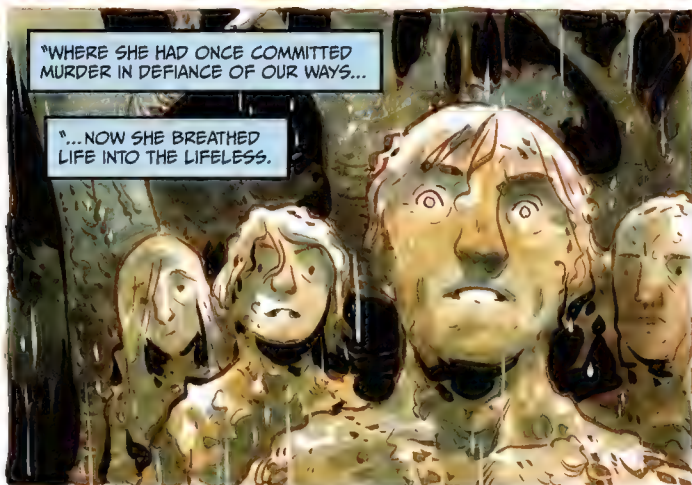
"...CREATING UNNATURAL BEASTS,
JUST TO SEE IF SHE COULD DO IT..."

"...JUST TO SEE IF WE
WERE A-WATCHING.



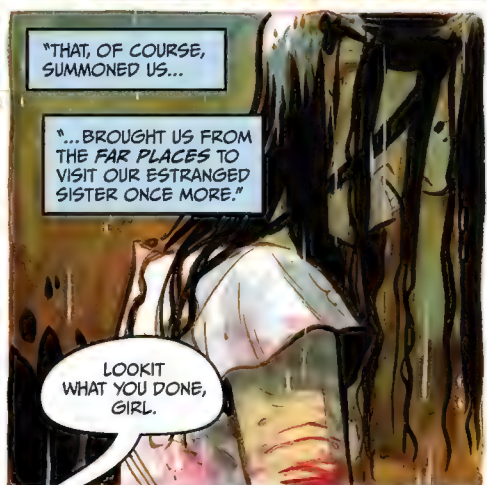
"AND WHEN WE DIDN'T REACT
IN THE WAY SHE WANTED...

"...SHE ONCE MORE DONE WHAT
WAS EXPRESSLY FORBIDDEN.



"WHERE SHE HAD ONCE COMMITTED
MURDER IN DEFIANCE OF OUR WAYS...

"...NOW SHE BREATHED
LIFE INTO THE LIFELESS.



"THAT, OF COURSE,
SUMMONED US..."

"...BROUGHT US FROM
THE FAR PLACES TO
VISIT OUR ESTRANGED
SISTER ONCE MORE."

LOOKIT
WHAT YOU DONE,
GIRL.

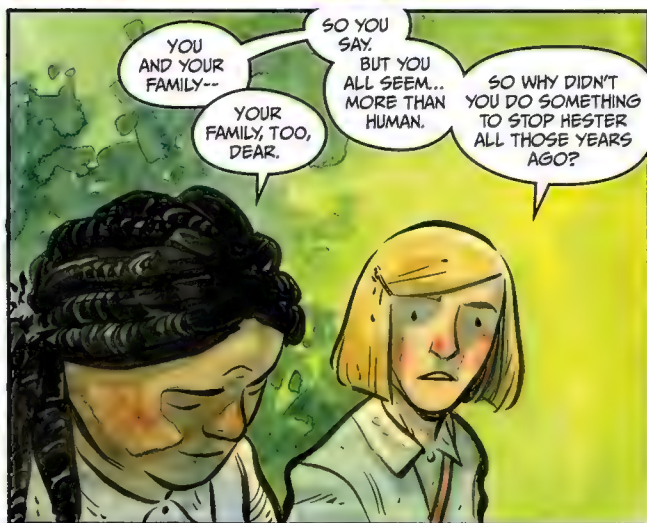




AFTER ALL,
AS FAR AS HESTER
WAS CONCERNED,
WE HAD
ALREADY DONE THE
VERY WORST WE
COULD TO HER.

IF YOU
DON'T MIND
MY ASKING,
ODESSA...

...WHY
DIDN'T YOU DO
SOMETHING
MORE?



YOU
AND YOUR
FAMILY--

YOUR
FAMILY, TOO,
DEAR.

SO YOU
SAY,
BUT YOU
ALL SEEM...
MORE THAN
HUMAN.

SO WHY DIDN'T
YOU DO SOMETHING
TO STOP HESTER
ALL THOSE YEARS
AGO?



AS I
MENTIONED...
...THERE ARE
TRADITIONS THAT
EVEN WE MUST
REVERE.



BESIDES...

...IF WE HAD
DONE AWAY WITH
HESTER BACK
THEN...

...YOU
MIGHT NOT BE
WITH US RIGHT
NOW.



MAYBE...

...THAT WOULD
HAVE BEEN FOR
THE BEST.

DON'T TALK
SUCH NONSENSE,
GIRL.

I DON'T
BELIEVE THAT
AND NEITHER
DO YOU.





I THINK
MAYBE I'D LIKE TO
GO A DIFFERENT
WAY.



I THOUGHT
YOU WERE GOING
TO SHOW ME AROUND
THE COUNTY.

I ALREADY
KNOW WHAT LIES
BEYOND YONDER
BRIDGE.



IS THERE A
REASON YOU DON'T
WANT ME TO VISIT
YOUR HOME?

IF IT'S
ALL THE SAME
TO YOU...

...I'D SIMPLY
LIKE TO GO
THIS WAY.



IF
THAT SUITS
YOU.

SOONER
OR LATER,
THOUGH, YOU'LL
HAVE TO TRUST
ME...

...UNLESS
YOU DECIDE
NOT TO.



YOU AND
YOURS SHOW
UP OUT OF
NOWHERE...

... SAYING
YOU'RE MY
FAMILY...

... SAYING
YOU WANT TO
HELP ME...

... BUT I DON'T
GUESS I KNOW
ANYTHING ABOUT
YOU.



WELL, THAT'S WHY
WE'RE TAKING THIS
CONSTITUTIONAL,
ISN'T IT?

YOU HAVE
QUESTIONS ABOUT
WHO WE ARE...

... WHERE
WE COME
FROM...

... AND I
MEAN TO REMEDY
THAT AS MUCH
AS I CAN.

"AS TO WHERE WE
CAME FROM..."

"...THAT'S NOT SO
SIMPLE A QUESTION.

"I ONLY KNOW THAT
WE HAVE HEARD ABOUT
ALWAYS BEEN.



"WE'RE A FAMILY,
LIKE WE'VE SAID..."

"...IN THAT WE COME
FROM THE SAME PLACE..."



"...BUT WE DON'T NONE
OF US STAY TOGETHER.

"WE EACH OF US WANDER THE
WORLD IN OUR OWN WAY..."

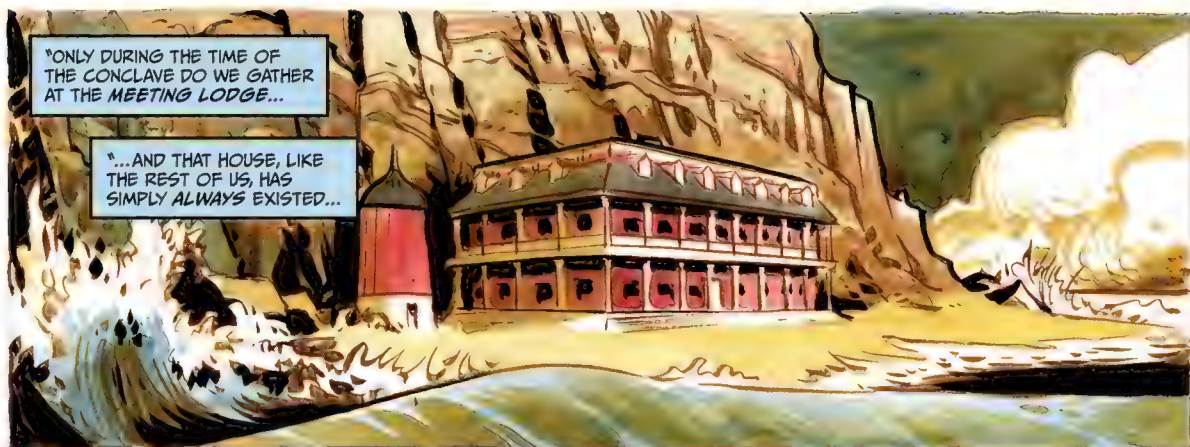


"THOSE ARE THE FIRST
OF OUR TRADITIONS.

"NEVER TOGETHER.

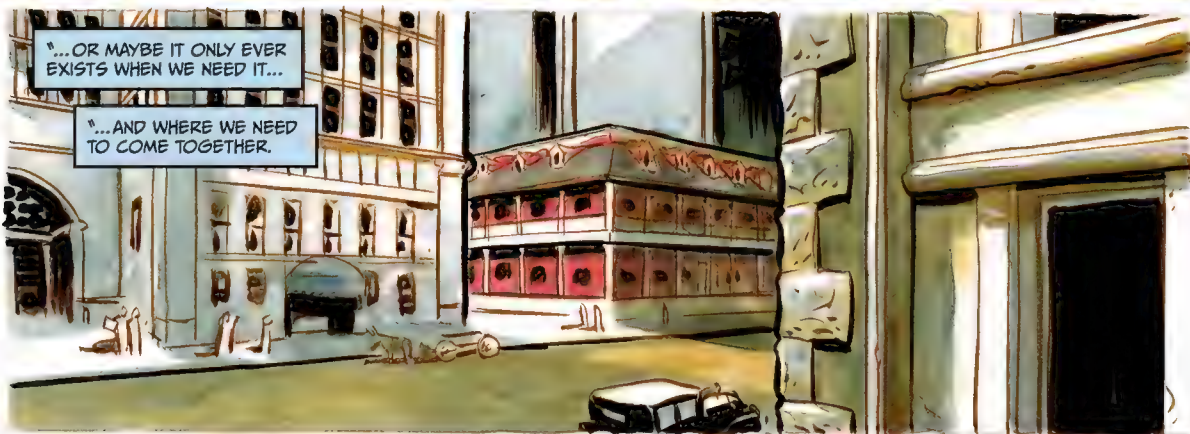
"...AND NEVER **SETTLING**
IN ANY ONE PLACE.





"ONLY DURING THE TIME OF
THE CONCLAVE DO WE GATHER
AT THE MEETING LODGE..."

"...AND THAT HOUSE, LIKE
THE REST OF US, HAS
SIMPLY ALWAYS EXISTED..."



"...OR MAYBE IT ONLY EVER
EXISTS WHEN WE NEED IT..."

"...AND WHERE WE NEED
TO COME TOGETHER."



"THE CONCLAVES TAKE PLACE
BUT ONCE EACH DECADE..."

"...BUT THE LODGE HAS APPEARED
--AND CALLED US ALL TOGETHER--
ON OCCASIONS OF GREAT IMPORTANCE."

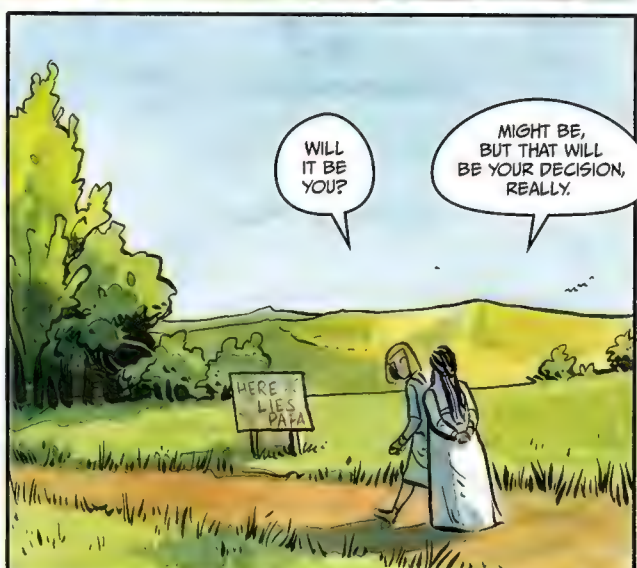
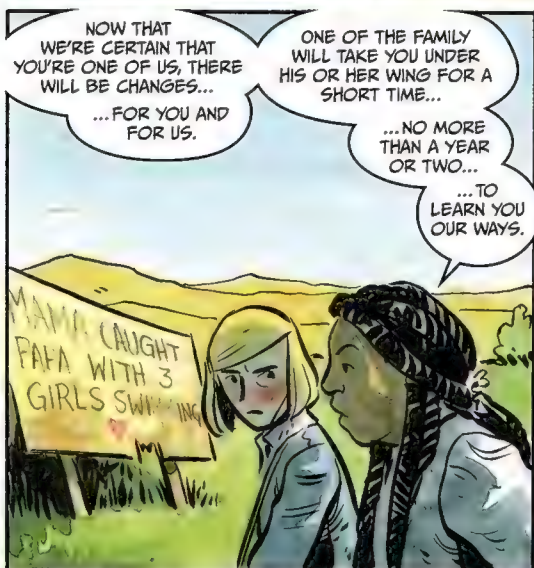


"THOSE TIMES ARE FEW
AND FAR BETWEEN..."

"...ONLY A HANDFUL OF
INSTANCES THAT I RECALL..."

"...MOST OF THEM INVOLVING
HESTER AND HER ANTICS..."







"WE'RE EACH OF US DIFFERENT.

"WE EACH HAVE OUR OWN GIFTS.

"TAKE ME, FOR INSTANCE.

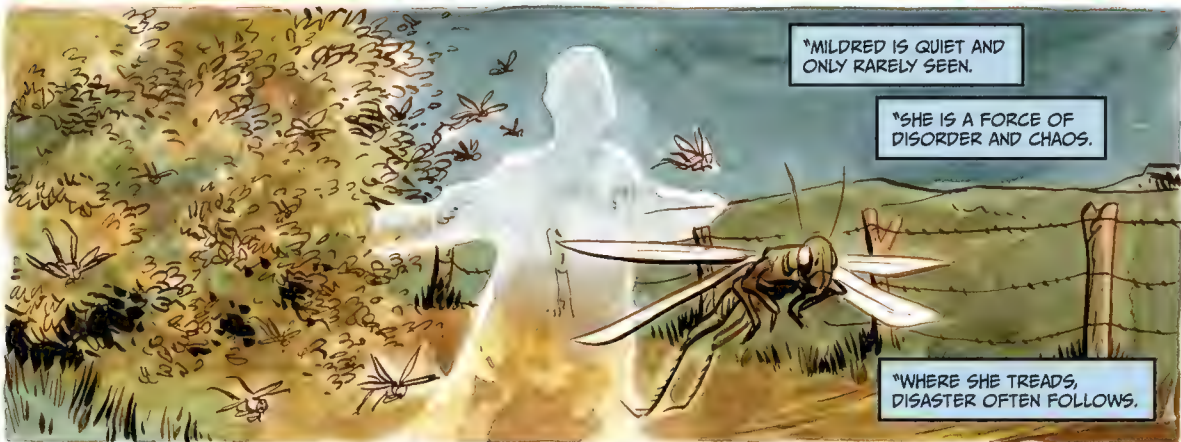
"I HAVE A CONNECTION TO THE WOODS AND ALL THE CREATURES THAT LIVE THEREABOUTS.



"LEVI, ON THE OTHER HAND, IS A PSYCHOPOMP...

"...AND HE GUIDES THE DEAD TO THE AFTERLIFE...

"...AND THE LIVING FROM ONE STAGE OF LIFE TO THE NEXT.



"MILDRED IS QUIET AND ONLY RARELY SEEN.

"SHE IS A FORCE OF DISORDER AND CHAOS.

"WHERE SHE TREADS, DISASTER OFTEN FOLLOWS.



"WILLA IS A KNITTING WITCH.

"SHE CAN STITCH OUT THE KNOTS OF FATE WITH THEM NEEDLES OF HERS...

"...CONTROLLING FORTUNE AND CALAMITY ALIKE.



"KAINE IS A
BOGEYMAN.

"NO ONE WHO IS SLEEPING
WILL WAKE IN HIS PRESENCE...
AND HIS WHISPERS BRING VIVID
--AND EVEN DEADLY-- NIGHTMARES.

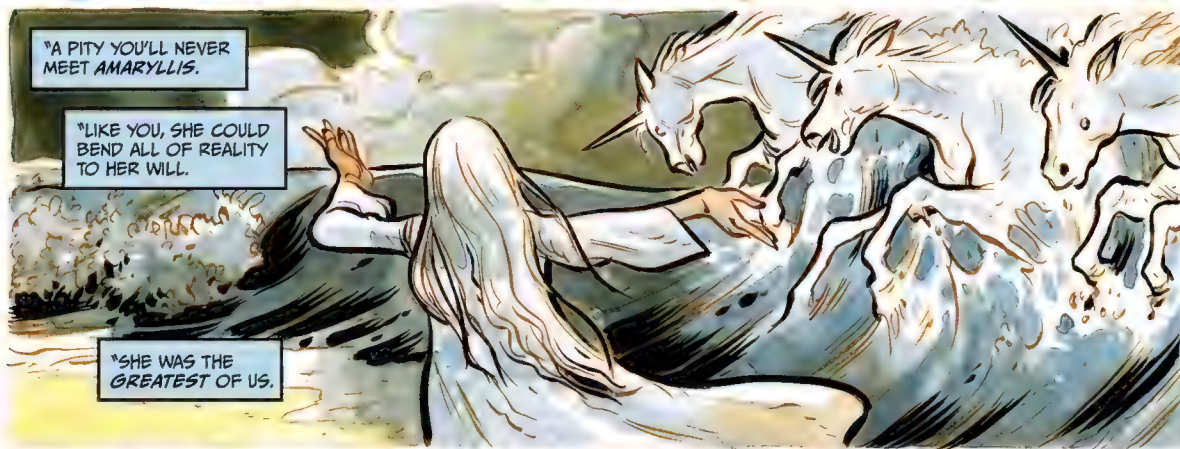
"IF I WERE YOU,
I WOULDN'T WANT
TO CHOOSE HIM
AS MY GUIDE.



"THE SAME CAN BE
SAID FOR CORBIN.

"HE'S A NECROMANCER,
AND HE CAN CALL UP
HAINTS TO DO HIS BIDDING...

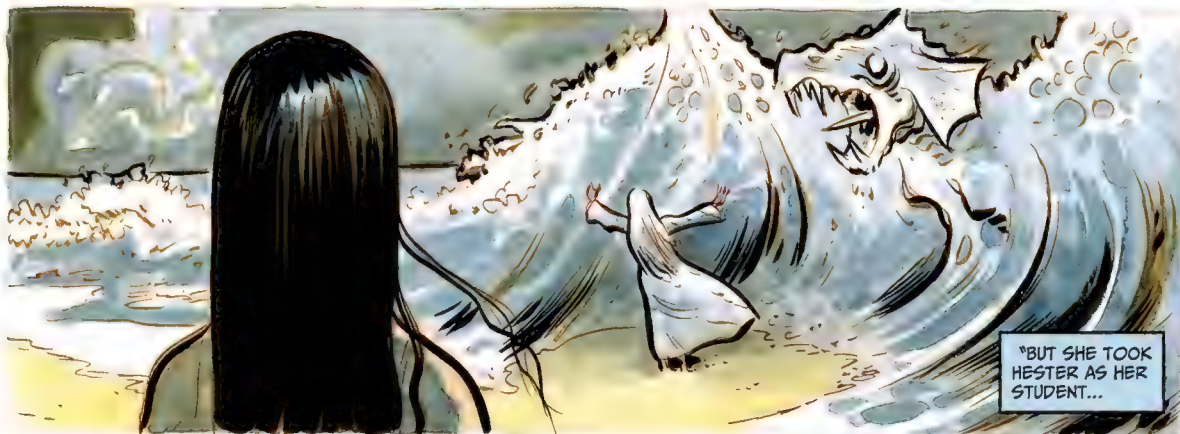
"...BUT ONLY THOSE HE
KILLS HIMSELF WILL
HEED HIS COMMANDS.



"A PITY YOU'LL NEVER
MEET AMARYLLIS.

"LIKE YOU, SHE COULD
BEND ALL OF REALITY
TO HER WILL.

"SHE WAS THE
GREATEST OF US.



"BUT SHE TOOK
HESTER AS HER
STUDENT...



...AND THAT WAS HER UNDOING.



WHAT HAPPENED TO HER?
WHAT DID HESTER DO?

OH, I DON'T KNOW THAT YOU WANT TO HEAR ABOUT THAT.



HERE YOU GO, MS. EMMY.
NO CHARGE.

THANK YOU KINDLY.



ARE YOU SURE YOU DON'T WANT ONE?

THEY'RE DELICIOUS...

...MAYBE ONE OF MY FAVORITE THINGS EVEN THOUGH I DON'T GET THEM OFTEN.

I'LL PASS, IF IT'S ALL THE SAME TO YOU.



SUCH PLEASURES ARE NOT FOR OUR KIND.

THEY BIND US...

...LIKE FOOD FROM THE FAIR FOLK.

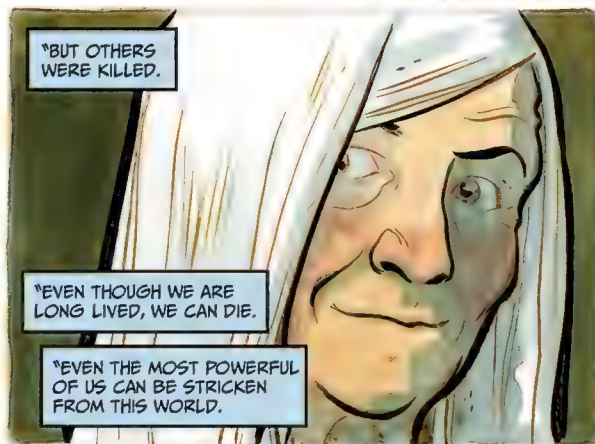




"ONCE...LONG AGO...OUR NUMBERS WERE PLENTIFUL. WE WERE SPREAD OUT ACROSS THE WORLD.

"OVER TIME, SOME OF US SIMPLY VANISHED...FADED LIKE OLD MEMORIES...

"...OR LEFT THIS REALM IN SEARCH OF OTHERS.



"BUT OTHERS WERE KILLED.

"EVEN THOUGH WE ARE LONG LIVED, WE CAN DIE.

"EVEN THE MOST POWERFUL OF US CAN BE STRICKEN FROM THIS WORLD.



"THERE WAS EVEN A TIME WHEN WE WARRED AGAINST ONE ANOTHER..."

COME HERE, HESTER.
LOOK OUT ACROSS THE WAVES WITH ME.

"...SIBLING KILLING SIBLING OUT OF GREED AND JEALOUSY AND EVEN BOREDOM.



"AMARYLLIS HELPED TO PUT AN END TO THE CONFLICT AMONG US."

TELL ME WHAT YOU SEE OUT THERE.

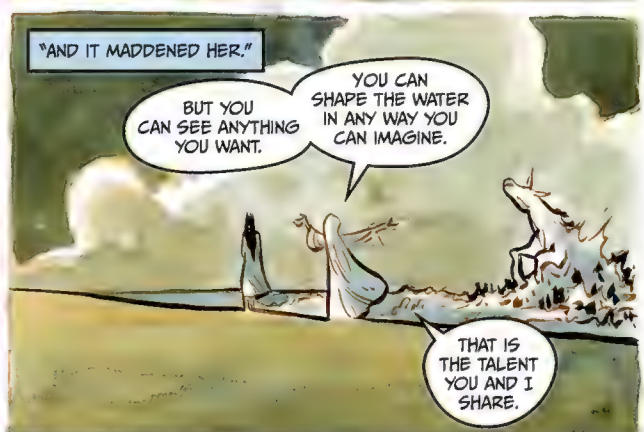
"SHE HELPED ESTABLISH THE LAW...THE TRADITION... THAT NO MEMBER OF OUR FAMILY WOULD EVER KILL ANOTHER.



"SHE SAW IN HESTER GIFTS ALMOST EQUAL TO HER OWN."

NOTHING.
I DON'T SEE ANYTHING.

"IT WAS A POWER THAT HESTER HERSELF COULD NOT SEE...

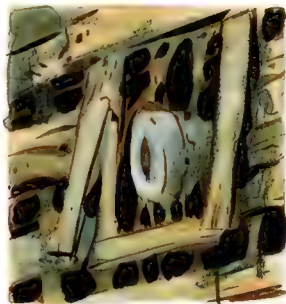
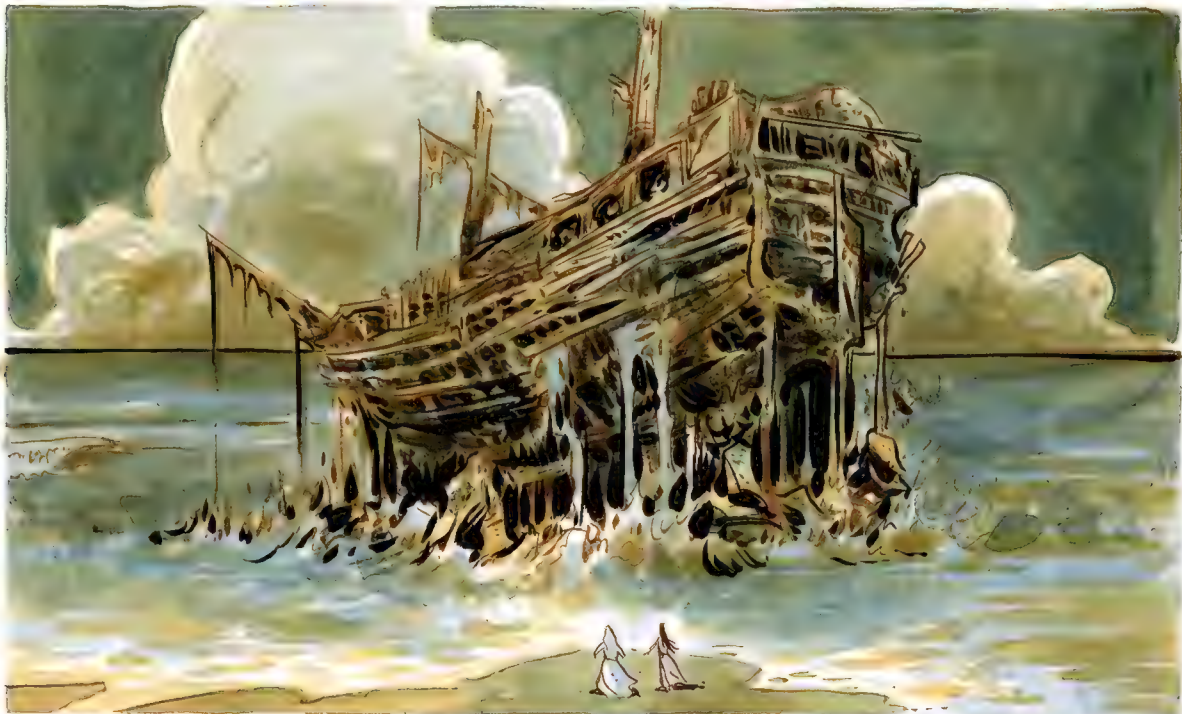
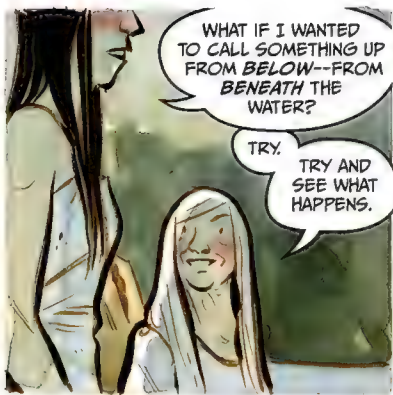


"AND IT MADDENED HER."

BUT YOU CAN SEE ANYTHING YOU WANT.

YOU CAN SHAPE THE WATER IN ANY WAY YOU CAN IMAGINE.

THAT IS THE TALENT YOU AND I SHARE.



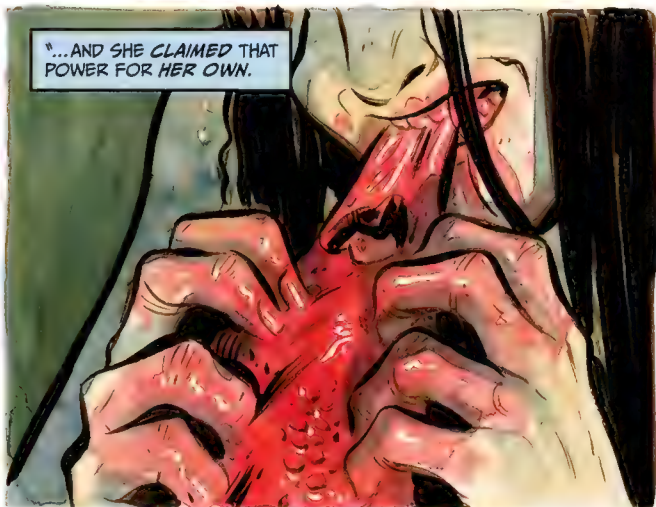


"HESTER COVETED
THE POWER AMARYLLIS
POSSESSED..."

"...AND SO SHE BROKE
OUR TRADITIONS FOR
THE FIRST TIME..."



"...AND SHE CLAIMED THAT
POWER FOR HER OWN."



"THAT IS WHY WE
BANISHED HER..."

"...BECAUSE WE WEREN'T
WILLING TO GO AGAINST
THE LAWS OURSELVES..."



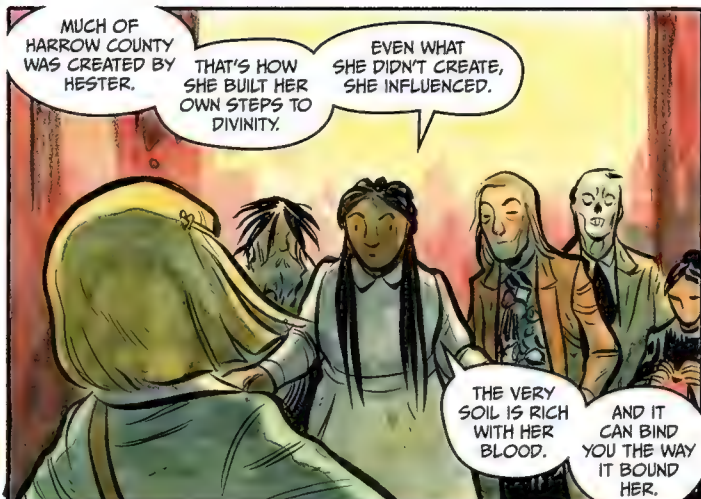








BUT--



MUCH OF
HARROW COUNTY
WAS CREATED BY
HESTER.

THAT'S HOW
SHE BUILT HER
OWN STEPS TO
DIVINITY.

EVEN WHAT
SHE DIDN'T CREATE,
SHE INFLUENCED.

THE VERY
SOIL IS RICH
WITH HER
BLOOD.

AND IT
CAN BIND
YOU THE WAY
IT BOUND
HER.



YOU'LL
NEVER BE ABLE
TO COME WITH
US...

...TO TRULY
BECOME ONE
OF US...

...TO TRULY
UNDERSTAND YOUR
PLACE IN THE
WORLD...

...UNTIL
THIS PLACE IS
DESTROYED.



YOU WANT
ME TO DESTROY
HARROW COUNTY?
I WON'T
DO THAT!

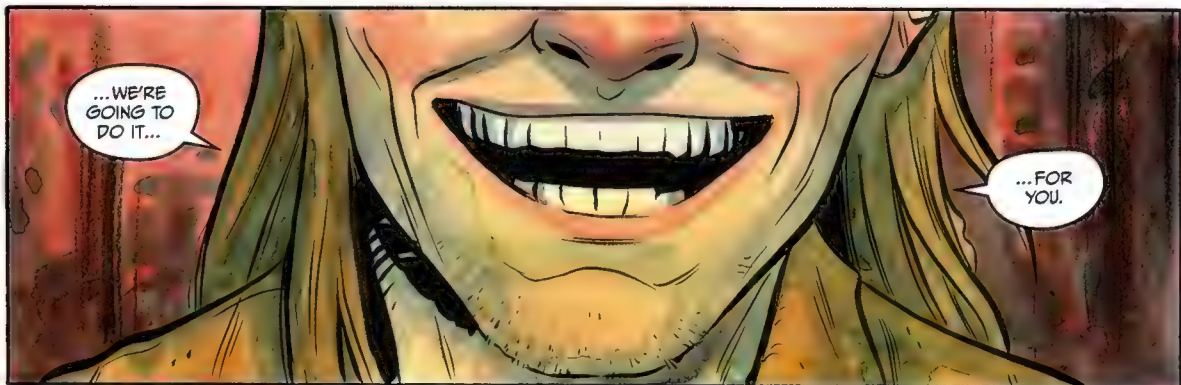
I
CAN'T!



DON'T
YOU WORRY
NONE, LITTLE
SISTER.

WE WOULDN'T
NEVER ASK YOU TO
SHOULDER SUCH
A BURDEN.

AND
THAT'S
WHY...



...WE'RE
GOING TO
DO IT...

...FOR
YOU.



66

SIXTEEN



THE MEETING LODGE DIDN'T
EXIST IN OUR WORLD EXCEPT
DURING THE CONCLAVE...

...WHEN THE OTHERWORLDLY BEINGS
WHO CALLED THEMSELVES EMMY'S
TRUE FAMILY GATHERED...

...OR DURING
TROUBLED TIMES...

...WHEN THESE CREATURES--WHO
WERE FAR REMOVED FROM NATURAL
FOLK--CAME TOGETHER TO GUIDE
THE COURSE OF THE WORLD...

...A PLACE THEY DIDN'T
RIGHTLY UNDERSTAND.

IT WAS SUPPOSED TO BE
SANCTUARY FOR THEIR KIND...

...A SAFE PLACE...

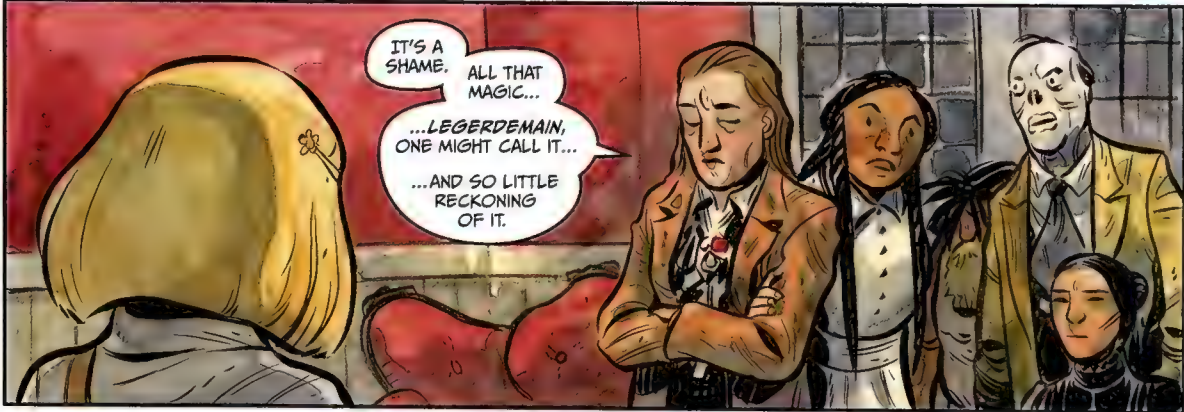
...AND YET EMMY FELT TRAPPED
WITHIN ITS WALLS.

THERE
ARE PEOPLE
HERE!
GOOD
FOLKS!

AND I
WON'T LET
YOU HURT
THEM!



IT'S A
SHAME.
ALL THAT
MAGIC...
...LEGERDEMAIN,
ONE MIGHT CALL IT...
...AND SO LITTLE
RECKONING
OF IT.



A GOOD MANY OF THEM
"GOOD FOLKS" AIN'T
EVEN REAL.
THEY WERE CALLED
UP BY HESTER, THE WAY
A HOG FARMER CALLS THE
HERD IN FOR SLOP.
SHE
MADE
THEM...
...MADE THEM--EVEN
THOUGH SHE WAS FORBIDDEN
TO DO SO--TO WORSHIP
HER.

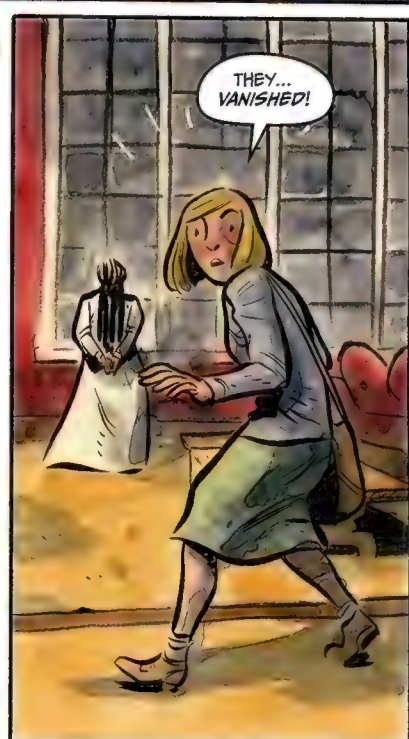
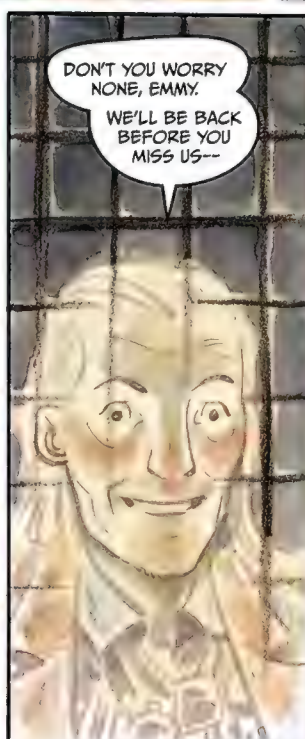


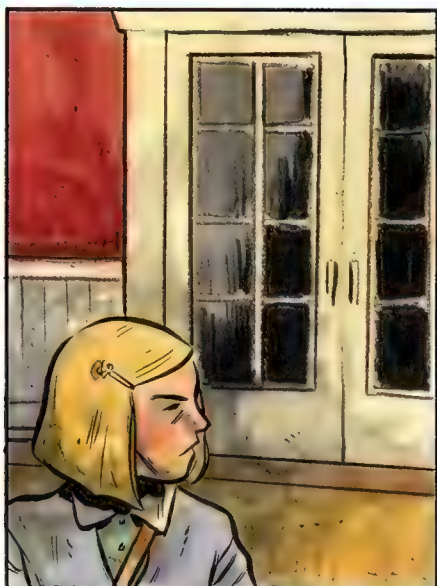
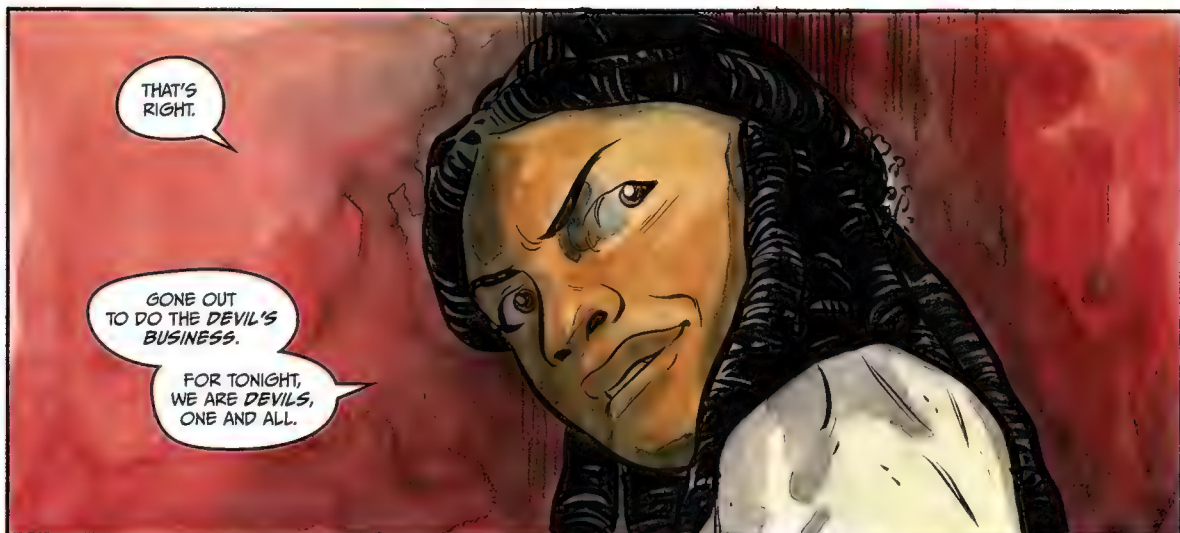
AND THEM
OTHERS...THE ONES
SHE DIDN'T
CREATE...
...THEY AIN'T
THE SAME
AS US.
THEIR
LIGHTS SNUFF OUT
OH SO QUICK
ANYHOW.



BEST
TO KILL THEM
ALL...
...RAZE THESE
LANDS...
...AND LET
YOUR TEARS SALT
THE EARTH.









--HELL.



NOT QUITE, CHILD.

NOT QUITE.

BUT I WOULDN'T THINK TO GO WANDERING TOO FAR.



THE WASTES ARE NEVER ENDING, NEAR AS WE CAN TELL.

IT WOULD BE SO EASY TO LOSE YOUR WAY.

AND FOREVER IS A MIGHTY LONG TIME TO BE LOST.



I'M A PRISONER, THEN. IS THAT HOW IT IS?



ONLY FOR A WHILE.

AND ONLY IF YOU CHOOSE TO SEE IT THAT WAY.

WE CAN USE THE TIME TO CATCH UP, YOU AND I.



I'LL BREW US SOME TEA WHILE WE WEATHER THE STORM.



"WON'T NOBODY
TROUBLE US FOR
A SPELL."



DON'T WORRY,
EMMY.

THAT OL'
SQUALL CAN'T
HARM US IN
HERE.

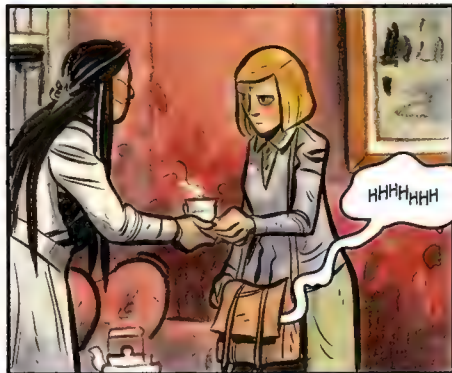
IT'S RAGED FOR
AS LONG AS ANYONE
CAN REMEMBER, BUT THIS
HOUSE HAS ALWAYS
STOOD AGAINST ITS
BELLING.



SOME OF US BELIEVE
THE STORM IS JUST ANOTHER
OF OUR KITH AND KIN...

...ONE WHO LOST
HIS FLESH AND BONES
LONG AGO...

...AND THE HOWLING
WIND IS JUST HIM CRYING
OUT TO BE MADE WHOLE
ONCE MORE.



HHHHHH



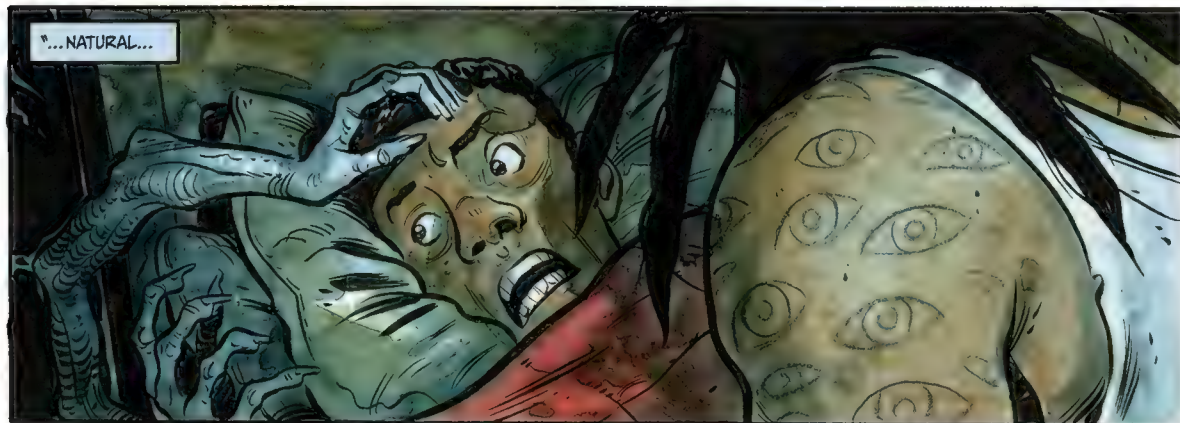
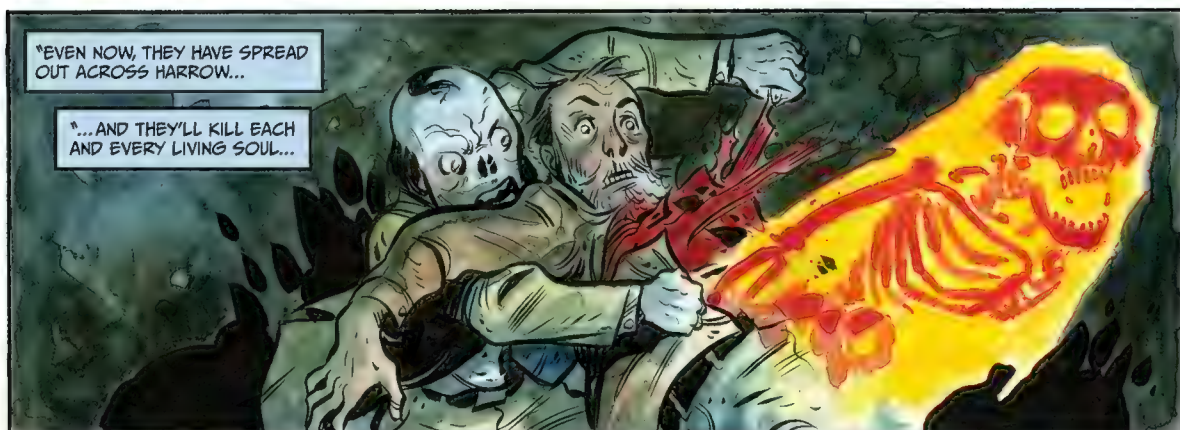
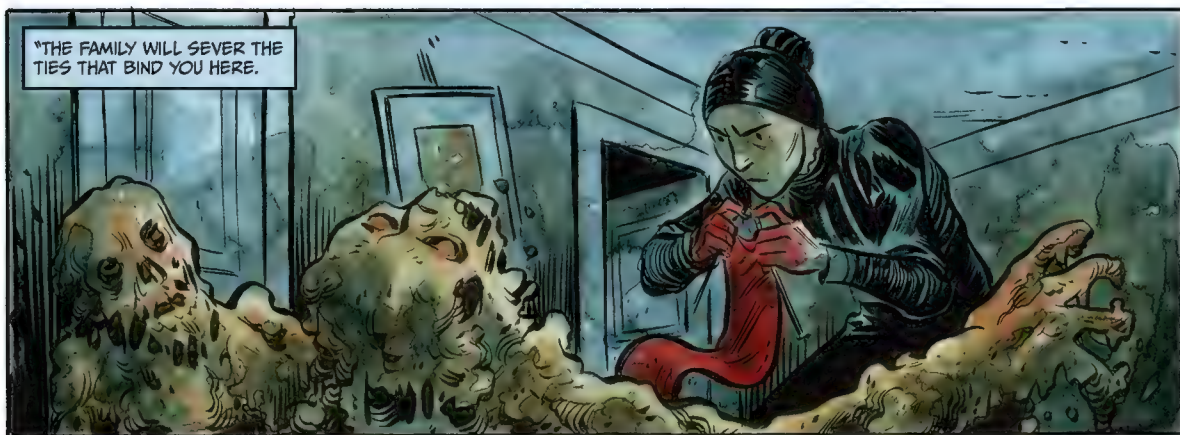
YOU CAN'T
KEEP ME
HERE.

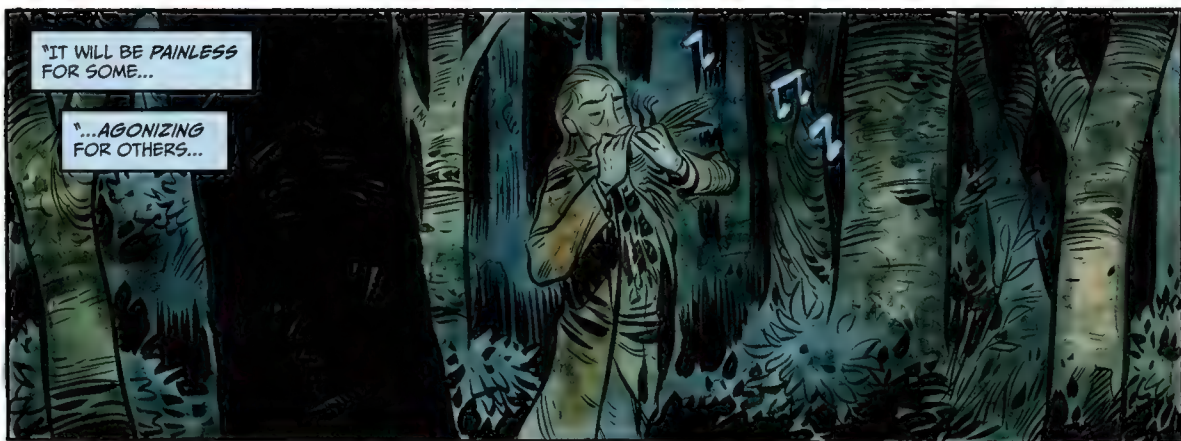
WHEREVER
HERE IS.




WE'RE
NOT YOUR
ENEMIES,
EMMY.







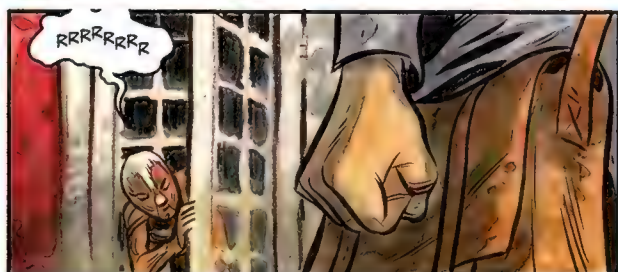


BUT IF YE'VE
COME OUT HERE
TA KILL ME...

...YE'VE DONE
FORGOTTEN YER
LEARNIN'.

YE'VE FORGOTTEN
YER LAWS.







I THOUGHT
I'D AVOID ANY
KILLING MYSELF.

I THOUGHT
I'D LEAVE SUCH
THINGS TO THEM
OTHERS MORE
SUITED
TO IT.

BUT HARROW
COUNTY'S REEKING
MALFEASANCE HAS
FOUND US EVEN
HERE.



STOP IT,
ODESSA!

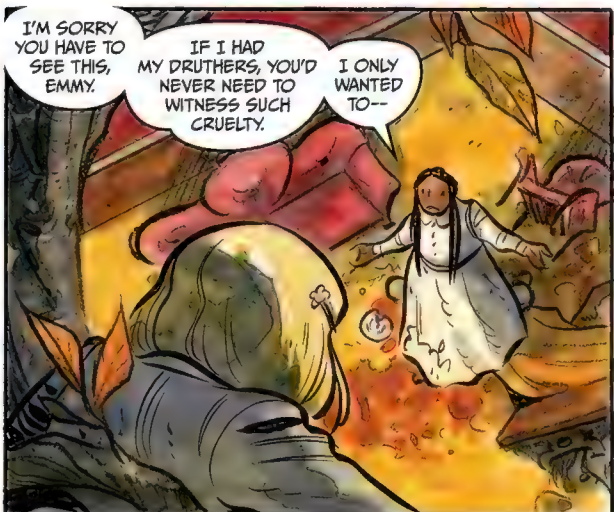
LET US
GO!



I'M SORRY
YOU HAVE TO
SEE THIS,
EMMY.

IF I HAD
MY DRUTHERS, YOU'D
NEVER NEED TO
WITNESS SUCH
CRUELTY.

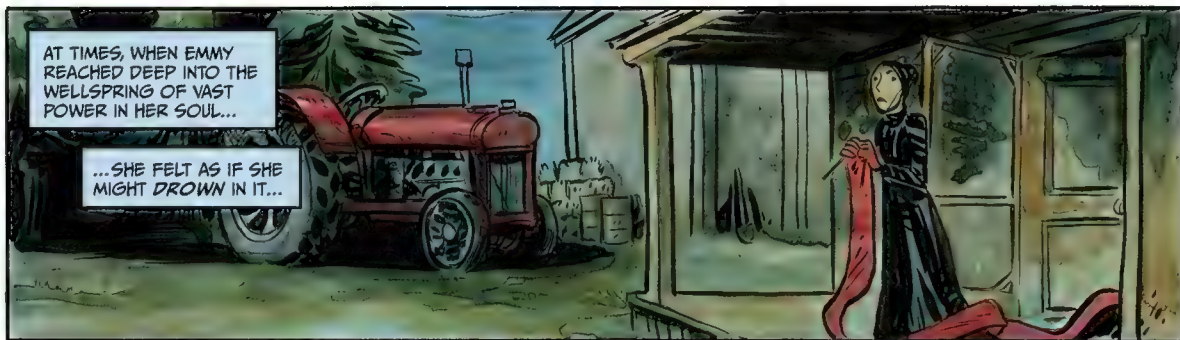
I ONLY
WANTED
TO--







...AND
THIS IS MY
HOME...



AT TIMES, WHEN EMMY
REACHED DEEP INTO THE
WELLSPRING OF VAST
POWER IN HER SOUL...

...SHE FELT AS IF SHE
MIGHT *DROWN* IN IT...



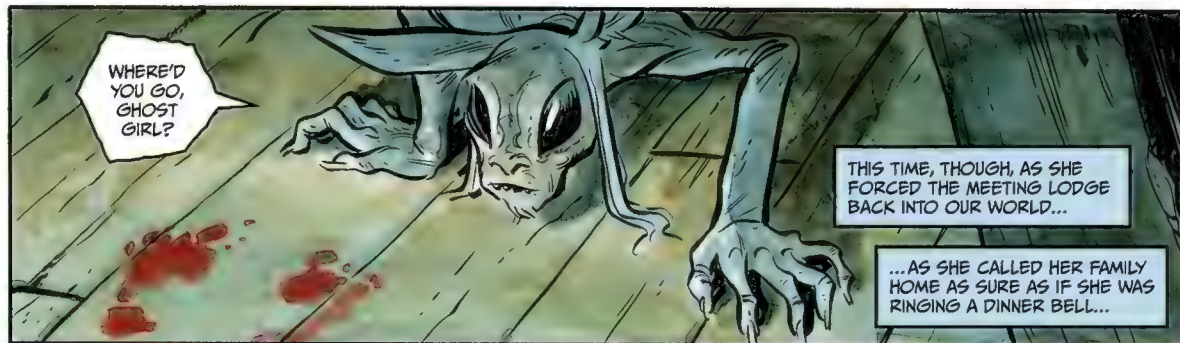
...AS IF THE *DARKNESS*
INSIDE OF HER MIGHT
OVERWHELM HER...

...MIGHT BLOSSOM LIKE
A BLACK FLOWER...



...SWALLOWING
HER WHOLE...

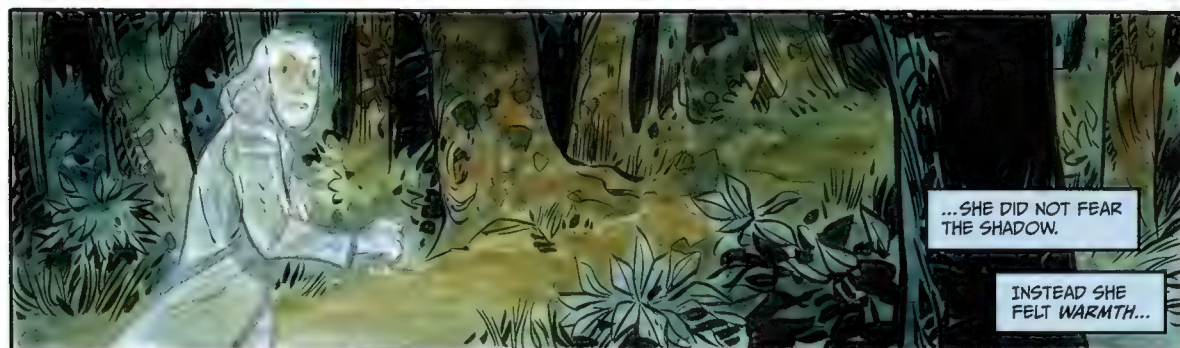
...AND KEEP ON GROWING
UNTIL IT CONSUMED THE
WORLD IN THE *COLD*
AND THE *DARK*.



WHERE'D
YOU GO,
GHOST
GIRL?

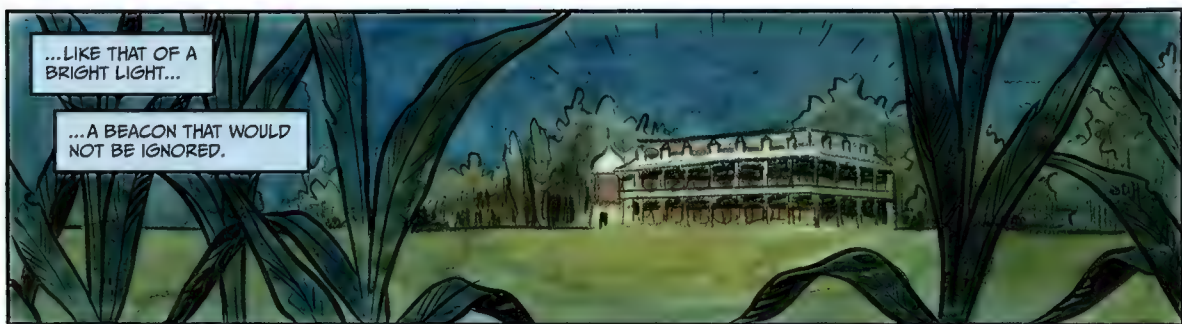
THIS TIME, THOUGH, AS SHE
FORCED THE MEETING LODGE
BACK INTO OUR WORLD...

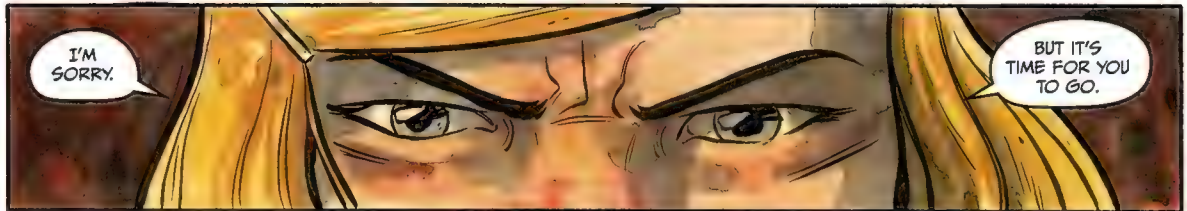
...AS SHE CALLED HER FAMILY
HOME AS SURE AS IF SHE WAS
RINGING A DINNER BELL...

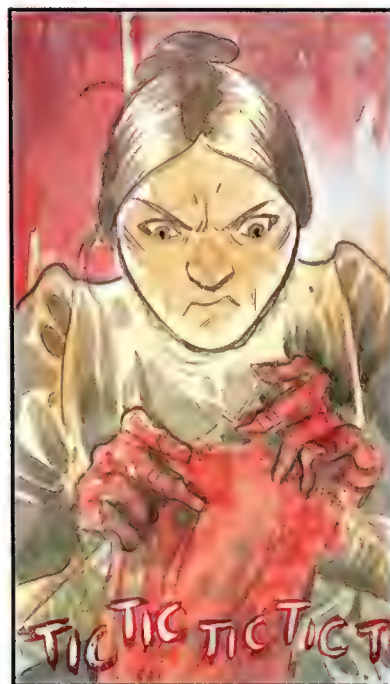


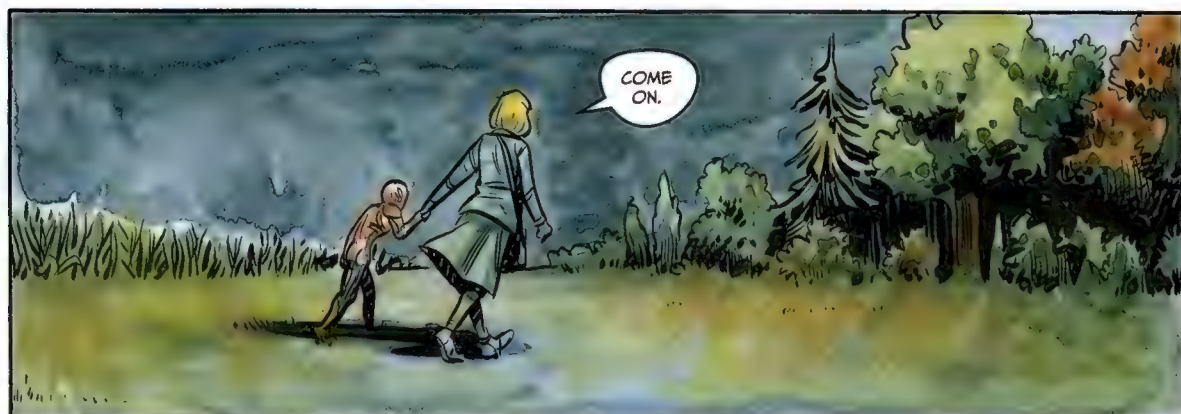
...SHE DID NOT FEAR
THE *SHADOW*.

INSTEAD SHE
FELT *WARMTH*...











LET'S
GO HOME.





The first half of the highly acclaimed, Eisner-nominated horror-fantasy tale, collected in a value-priced omnibus.

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WITH A VA-VA-VA

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...AND I AM NOT A NUT BAG



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